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**AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY  
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**



# An Historical Summary of English Literature

By

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WITH FULL INDEX

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD  
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne  
1920

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## PREFACE

ANYTHING in the nature of a cram-book on English literature lays its compiler open to the charge of literary vandalism and calls for a word at least of apology. It would not be impossible to defend the cram-book, in this case as in others, if it were necessary ; but the idea at the back of this summary is not wholly that of conveying information in a succinct tabloid form. In regard to important individual authors it draws attention to the salient facts of their outer life, to the leading characteristics of their work and to their place in literature. No pretence to biographical or bibliographical completeness is made ; but it is hoped that no important work has been overlooked and no date of any significance omitted. Similarly no desire of original criticism has been entertained, and the compiler's personal preferences and predilections have been as far as possible held in abeyance. Hence it is hoped that the book may be a safe and reliable guide to the student, helping him in the choice of what to read and drawing his attention to those opinions and criticisms which have become, by the wear and tear of the past, standard and unassailable.

The book, however, aims at being something more than a cento of facts and opinions about individual writers. It has sought to present in summary form the growth of our literature from its rudiments in the Saxon period to the latest productions of its genius, so that the

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reader may see almost at a glance what has been done in those periods which he has not made the subject of special study. It is hoped that, on this side, the book will prove a useful companion or note-book to the adequate and excellent histories of our literature that are available. Notes on the contemporary literature and general conditions of Europe have been added to most of the chapters whenever they seemed to bear upon our own.

It would be difficult to acknowledge all one's indebtedness in such a work as this. Apart, however, from standard biographies and critical works, I owe much to Mr. Courthope's History of English Poetry, to the various writings of Professor Saintsbury, of Mr. Edmund Gosse, Sir Leslie Stephen, the late Professor Dowden, Professor W. P. Ker, Dr. Skeat, Stopford Brooke, Ten Brink, Professor W. H. Schofield, Professor Hugh Walker and many others; and especially to the Cambridge History of English Literature and its invaluable bibliographies which have been taken as the final authority in the matter of dates.

E. W. E.

BISHOP'S STORTFORD,  
*December, 1919.*

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# An Historical Summary of English Literature

## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

BEFORE the Anglo-Saxon invaders made a home for themselves in Britain, our island had long been in possession of men of another Aryan race, who had developed a culture and laid the seeds of a literature peculiarly their own—a literature that was to play a prominent part in the imaginative work of the more successful race and to infuse it with a spirit, pervading yet not easy to define ; enriching it with a romantic glamour and mystic aspirations apparently alien to the simple Teutonic genius. While therefore the basis of our English literature is Teutonic, it is not inappropriate for us, studying its origins, to glance by way of introduction at the literary remains of the Celtic people which survive to us.

The Celtic race seems to have come to Britain in two main migrations from the Continent. The first or Goidelic branch takes us back as far, probably, as 1000 B.C., if no farther. These Goidels supplanted a neolithic people fairly advanced in culture, the builders of Stonehenge and probably the founders of the Druidic worship. Driven westward, northward and into Ireland, by the second or Brythonic migration, the Goidels seem to have partially fused with their Iberian predecessors ; the admixture survives in the Scottish Highlands and in Ireland, and this Gaelic people has left us a large body of stories and legends which are the debris and misunderstood survivals of primitive Aryan myths (Rhys).

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The extant Gaelic literature is contained in a number of manuscripts, chiefly Irish, the earliest of which goes back to the eleventh century. There are verses, tales, legends of heroes, stories of St. Patrick and other Irish saints, chronicles, translations. The verse is written in complex metrical forms ; it suggests a delicate feeling for nature and a prevalent melancholy different from anything in Anglo-Saxon, and in such a poem as “*Deirdre’s Lament*”\* reveals a sense of beauty in feeling and expression for which England had to wait for centuries. The tales have similar qualities, and also the distinguishing characteristics of heroic sagas in general : a delight in combat and bloodshed, in feasting and adventure, and a naïve credulity in face of the marvellous. Two cycles are especially noteworthy : (1) that of Cuchulainn, the “Irish Achilles,” the Ulster hero ; and (2) that of Ossian, dealing with Fionn and other heroes presumed to have lived in the third century A.D. The latter cycle is of special importance to the history of literature in England and in Europe. A collection of Ossianic stories rife among the Scottish Gaels was made by the Dean of Lismore about 1512 ; it attracted no notice, and not till Macpherson issued his so-called translations (1760–3) did Ossian, and with him the spirit of the Gaels, really enter into our literature. Macpherson’s poems (p. 172) may or may not have been authentic in the narrow sense ; they re-awoke the Celtic note into conscious life, powerfully affected the Romantic revival in the eighteenth century, and set afoot a strong wave of interest in Celtic things that still survives (p. 248).

The Brythonic branch of the race overcame the Goidels and was in possession of Southern England at least by 300 B.C. The Brythons were little influenced by the Goidels, though partially sharing their traditions. The Roman invasion passed over them without destroying them, but they never became a political unit and were an easy prey to the organizing ability of their Saxon conquerors. The battle of Deorham (577)

\* *Lyra Celtica* : ed. William Sharp (Geddes : Edinburgh).

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isolated the Cornish Britons and drove many oversea to Brittany ; similarly the battle of Chester (613) separated the Cymry of Wales from their kinsmen in Cumbria ; and Winwoedfield (655) was the death-knell of the Cymry's last hope.

The early poetry of the Cymry is contained in several medieval manuscripts of which the most important are the "Black Book of Carmarthen" (c. 1100-1200) and the "Red Book of Hergest" (1300-1400). The poems are associated with the names of the legendary bards, Taliesin, Llwyarch Hen, Aneurin ; they reflect the age of conflict, and go back especially to the strife between Ida and Urien for the possession of Northumbria. Aneurin's *Y Gododin* is the most ancient of authentic Welsh poems. A revival of Welsh poetry took place in the tenth century, and again during the medieval period, when the MSS were redacted. The intrinsic value of the poems seems to be small ; they are often imaginative, but also vague and conventional ; their form is often complex and sophisticated, the strophic "triads" being the most characteristic ; and their direct influence over English literature is negligible.

The prose tales found in the manuscripts are superior to the poems. The best are contained in the twelve stories of the *Mabinogion*, edited and translated into an excellent English form by Lady Charlotte Guest in 1849. The stories are told with a naïve simplicity revealing no foreign influences ; five of them are Arthurian, of which *Kulhwch and Olwen* and the *Dream of Rhonabwy* are not found elsewhere. Careful analysis by modern scholars has shown them to be the confused relics of ancient myths, redacted by men who did not understand their meaning.

Latin writings survive to show us that Christianity and scholarship had found a congenial home among the Britons. Gildas (? 500-70) in his *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* has left us a valuable picture of the period of conquest ; unfortunately he was a rhetorician and a preacher, not an historian ; he is a Jeremiah bewailing the sins of his countrymen, and makes no mention

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of Arthur or his victories. A *Historia Brittonum*, uncritical and indeed impossible, but much used by later compilers, was ascribed to an unknown Nennius of the eighth century. Asser (d. 911), the biographer of Alfred, was a Welsh monk of St. David's. A more imposing Celtic figure is that of the famous scholastic philosopher, John Scotus Erigena (fl. 850), whose name is almost the only evidence of his origin. But during the dark ages, Ireland was the home of the best scholarship and the purest Christianity in Europe.

The brightest rays of Celtic literature, however, are those which came to Europe from the story of Arthur. The legends which grew round the name of a British ruler who seems to have successfully resisted the Saxon invaders (c. 500) were kept in memory among the Welsh and Breton Celts, and were let loose upon literature in the guise of history by Geoffrey of Monmouth in 1139. This legend, transfused by Christian and feudal influences, has proved itself the most vital nucleus of romantic story in English literature, from Layamon to Swinburne; and, whatever its ultimate origin may have been, it is a purely Celtic gift to us. Through it, in the words of Renan, "the creations of a half-conquered race have become the universal feast of imagination for mankind."

The first Teutonic settlers in Britain were the Jutes who occupied Kent. Earlier responsive to continental influences they contributed little to Old English literature. Then came the Saxons from Holstein and North Germany, who conquered Sussex, Wessex and Essex, c. 460–560, and through the family of Cerdic became the dominant branch. Finally the Angles, from the lowlands between the Elbe and Eider, probably kinsmen of the Lombard conquerors of Italy (568), founded East Anglia, Deira, Bernicia and Mercia, c. 500–600. At first the Angles were the most powerful group, and it was among them that Old English literature began. *Beowulf* and other poems, no doubt, they brought in some form from their home; but a Celtic, especially Gaelic, influence appeared early among them. Christ-

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ianity came to them from Iona, and until 664 the Irish type of worship prevailed. Scholars of European fame, like Bede, flourished in the Northumbrian monasteries ; two productive schools of poetry, those of Cædmon and of Cynewulf, grew up, and the latter especially shows much more than a trace of Celtic influence. But the Danish attacks and other causes weakened the Northumbrian ascendancy and destroyed a most promising growth of poetry. The West-Saxons produced the great prose of Alfred and Ælfric, but no poet. Is it fanciful to connect this with the loss of the fertilizing Celtic stream ?

The Celt has been cut off from exercising a direct effect on our literature by his language ; few of his words are on our lips, and those chiefly names of places and natural phenomena, e.g. *Aberdeen*, *Inverness*, *Dunstable*, *Ilfracombe*, *Lynmouth*, *Avon*, *Pennine*, with a few other words like *clan*, *glen*, *cairn*, *bog*, *brogue*, etc. But his undoubted contribution to the national blood has had its effect on the brain and the soul of the English people, and hence upon its literature. " Its chord of penetrating passion and melancholy," wrote Matthew Arnold, " its Titanism, as we see it in Byron,—what other European poetry possesses that like the English, and where do we get it from ? . . . The Celts are the prime authors of this vein of piercing regret and passion." The same writer in his essay on *Celtic Literature* (1867) expresses our debt to the Celt in language of eloquent enthusiasm : " the Celt's quick feeling for what is noble and distinguished gave his poetry style ; his indomitable personality gave it pride and passion ; his sensibility and nervous exaltation gave it a better gift still, the gift of rendering with wonderful felicity the magical charm of nature." Another phase of the Celtic genius is dwelt upon in Ernest Renan's illuminating essay on the poetry of the Bretons. " If it be permitted us," he says, " to assign sex to nations as to individuals, we should have to say without hesitation that the Celtic race, especially in regard to its Cymric or Breton branch, is an essentially feminine race. No human family, I believe, has carried so much mystery into love." When

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we remember all that imagination has woven into the vague tissue of the Arthurian stories, it is hard to combat these views. The Teuton was, in his way, responsive to nature and to love ; but, when we see him in his original nakedness, as in the *Edda* or the *Nibelungenlied*, the absence of that “natural magic,” that wistful melancholy and that romantic love-note which the Celtic enthusiasts hold belong to the Celtic race is painfully noticeable. The Celt indeed failed to achieve any really great work : for that the more patient and constructive Teuton was much better qualified. But if this is true,—if, that is, the Hamlets and Othellos of our literature are Teutonic in conception and still more in execution,—it is also true that the Titanias and Ariels, not to mention the Rosalinds and Imogens, are dominantly Celtic. The French, Italian, and classical literatures have played their part in moulding ours ; but their influence has been chiefly educative or external, bearing on the fashion of it, rather than on its essence. The Celtic influence is in the blood, and for that reason students of English literature should pay a little attention to the imperfect Celtic remains that have been saved. That influence is no doubt greater in Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. Neil Munro than in Mr. Kipling or Mr. Wells, but it is as truly alive in modern literature as at any other period, and is far more self-conscious.

## CHAPTER I

### OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

#### A. European Literature, 449-1066

THE interval between the fall of the Roman Empire and the formation of the present nations of Europe usually known as the Dark Ages ; most of the writings Christian or educational in purpose, written in Latin ; beginnings of vernacular literature noteworthy in England—less so in Germany ; crude beginnings of romance and allegory in France and Germany : did not affect English till after the Conquest ; literature and learning strong in Ireland (c. 700-900).

Latin authors important to English students are :—

**Boethius** (? 470-525) : minister of the Emperor Theodoric ; fell out of favour with his master, and while in prison wrote his *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, one of the most influential books of the Middle Ages ; translated by Alfred and Chaucer ; a philosophical dialogue in the spirit of Plato, setting forth the problems of Fate and Free Will and advocating a reasonable acquiescence in the unknown and imperfect workings of Providence ; partly in verse, but the prose the best portion. Most characteristic work of the period ; links Plato with Dante, the old world with the new. “ Boethius is the interpreter of the ancient world and its wisdom.” (Ker : *The Dark Ages*).

**Gregory the Great** (? 540-604) : opposed profane learning ; his writings—Morals, Pastoral Care, Dialogues—have a strong didactic purpose and a distinctive style ; formed an important element in religious education.

**Aldhelm** (?—709) : abbot of Malmesbury and bishop of Sherborne ; a widely-read scholar, revealing acquaintance with a long list of Latin authors ; wrote in a florid style, in prose and verse ; remembered by his Latin Riddles ; but long famous for other works ; a product of the school of Theodore and Hadrian of Canterbury ; followed by a school of imitators, the best known being St. Boniface ; his English verses not preserved.

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**Bede** (673–735) : lived most of his life as teacher and scholar at the monastery of Jarrow ; the greatest writer of his time in Europe ; a testimony to the strength of the schools of Northumbria (c. 680–780) ; author of many commentaries and expositions of scripture, of *Lives* of St. Cuthbert, and the abbots of Jarrow and Wearmouth, and of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, our main authority for the early history of England ; showed a fine historical sense, in spite of credulity in dealing with the miracles of the saints, such as Cuthbert ; love of truth and sincerity of aim conspicuous throughout ; a great scholar, a great man and a great Christian.

**Alcuin** (? 735–804) : not himself a great writer, but a great teacher ; educated at York, he carried English learning to the court of Charlemagne, where he became the centre of a revival of learning in France ; his letters and his Latin poems have interest.

**History** continued to be written, but the other Latin historians of this period had no influence in England.

**Latin Verse** gradually turned to popular themes. The Hymns of the Church were widely known, and the popular verse in similar metres was important as a transition to the metrical systems of French and Italian, and hence, later, to English.

## B. Pre-Christian Poetry in England

Very slight are the evidences of the pagan beliefs and religious myths of our Teutonic ancestors in English literature. The gods of the Angles and Saxons do not appear, nor any legends concerning them. A belief in Wyrd, a kind of Fate or inescapable and invincible destiny, is a characteristic Anglo-Saxon note ; and interesting survivals of ancient customs are to be found in *Beowulf*. Christianity came too soon and overwhelmed the Anglo-Saxon faith, without destroying its spirit, however. The heroic warrior : the generous war-lord : the full mead-cup : a heaven of fighting and feasting for the brave : a cold and gloomy hell for the coward : these are the moving themes.

Early English poetry probably the work of isolated minstrels (*scopas*) ; existing first as short ballads, celebrating the deeds of a hero ; composed originally for oral recitation or singing in the hall of some lord ; no English hero celebrated in any of them ; they deal with personages from Germany or Denmark ; hence

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probably came over with the original Saxon or Anglian invaders.

**Widsith**: the "wide-travelled" one, a fragment depicting the life of a wandering minstrel; mentions Attila and a number of Gothic chieftains of the early part of the fifth century; may be dated, in its original form, about 420.

**Waldhere**: two fragments dealing with the story of one Waltharius, a hero of the wars against Attila.

**The Complaint of Deor**: a short lyrical fragment, in elegiac strophes.

**The Wanderer**: a fine poem, probably in its present form of much later date; like **The Seafarer**, it deals with the sea and its mingled charm and terror: both are to be regarded as excellent examples of the best Anglo-Saxon verse, belonging in spirit to the adventurous early period; the Christian element probably a late addition.

**The Fight at Finnsburgh**: a fragment—about 50 lines—of a lost saga or epic, of which another fragment survives as an episode in *Beowulf*; a piece of excellent fighting.

**Beowulf**: the only complete survival of Old English epic poetry: nearly 3,200 lines in length; deals with the exploits of Beowulf, nephew of Hygelac, king of the Geatas. There are two main episodes:—

(i) The fight with Grendel and Grendel's dam, evil monsters which have ravaged the land of Hrothgar, and desolated his hall Heorot; these fights belong to the hero's youth: they are told in vivid style, clearly, and with due regard to suitable detail.

(ii) The fight with the fire-breathing dragon which in his old age ravages the land of the Geatas; Beowulf, though deserted by his comrades, except the faithful Wiglaf, slays the dragon, but is himself mortally injured; the poem closes with solemn burning of his corpse on the barrow by the sea.

**Characteristics.** Narrative rather than epic; a collection of hero songs given unity by a single minstrel; but the unity is not well maintained: in the last part especially there is much confusion and many repetitions. Yet both narrative and dialogue often rapid, forceful and dramatic; impressions of scenery often powerful; no attempt at adornment, except a few obvious and constantly used metaphors; no delicacy of feeling,

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but the strong simple human passions strongly depicted ; a remarkable product of its age and conditions.

The hero a typical Saxon warrior ; strong, fearless, boastful ; a firm, wise, and generous leader ; with an occasional passage of gentleness and a rude courtesy touched with tragic pathos at his lonely end : his story personal, not national.

**Source of the Poem.** Probable that Beowulf actually lived in the sixth century : a raid by Hygelac against the Chattuarii (the Hetware of *Beowulf*) is referred to by various Frankish writers. Some of the names of *Beowulf* reappear in Scandinavian stories of later date. Exploits of a real Beowulf probably identified with current folk-tales : these being the survivals of ancient myths—e.g. the fight with Grendel is fundamentally the fight between winter and summer, that with the dragon the mythical conflict of light and darkness. The stories were brought over by the Anglian invaders ; united by some pagan poet, perhaps as early as 650 ; written over by some Christian reviser who did not destroy its essentially pagan character, before 800 ; translated into West Saxon, and preserved in a MS of the tenth century.

### C. Christian Poetry

Like the pagan poetry, the Christian developed first in Northumbria. The new poetry shows the fundamental characteristics of the old : its love of conflict, its desire for glory, its worship of valour ; no change in metrical form or imagery ; new subjects of biblical and foreign origin treated like the old, especially in the finest passages ; e.g. *Judith* is a Bible story conceived in the spirit of a pagan saga.

Yet there are new elements : a softening of the harsh outlook on life and nature ; a lofty religious tone, which reveals itself in outbursts of praise to God, in the glorification of apostles and saints, and of martyrdom, in a vivid personal feeling of sorrow for sin, in a frequently expressed desire for an eternal happiness

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higher than the mead-hall or spear-play can give : these by the side of flashes and touches which recall the spirit of *Beowulf*.

The gentler feeling towards nature and the pervading lyrical tone of these new poems doubtless connect themselves with the Celtic origin of Northumbrian Christianity. To the old Teutonic melancholy and belief in a ruthless Wyrd comes the wistfulness of the Celt ; the Celtic missionaries preached a personal Christianity in which humanity was more important than ritual ; this is the note of the best of Old English verse between 650 and 800, and it represents the best poetry produced in Europe during the period.

(a) **The School of Cædmon :** The name of Cædmon preserved through an episode narrated by Bede (*Hist. Eccl.* IV 24). Cædmon a neatherd of the Abbey of Whitby whose poetic gift was revealed to him in a vision (680) ; his first hymn preserved by Bede in Latin ; became a monk and, as Bede says, " all that he could learn by listening he pondered in his heart and..... turned it into the sweetest of songs " ; paraphrased the early scriptures into verse, as well as the life of Christ and His apostles, and sang the terrors of the day of judgment.

Probably little of his original work survives ; the poems attributed to him are certainly of later date, but they may have been founded upon his songs, sung to the harp in the Northumbrian monasteries.

**Genesis A :** on the whole a dull paraphrase of the events of Genesis, except where the Teutonic spirit peers through the Christian, e.g. in the fighting episodes, in the character of Abraham, in the sacrifice of Isaac (one of the best passages), in the account of the flood, etc.

**Genesis B :** an interpolation of over 600 lines in the above, the work clearly of another hand than A ; shown by modern research to be a translation or paraphrase of an Old Saxon poem by the author of *Heliand* : " an early and a pleasing instance of the fruitful exchange of literary ideas between two great nations."\* Contains some excellent work, notably the character of Satan, with which it is hard to believe that Milton was not acquainted.

**Exodus :** paraphrases the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptians ; a vivid narrative of almost epic dignity ; the work of a real poet, not afraid to be original ; martial in spirit ; rich in description ; full of forcible word-painting ; " the poet was evidently an epic singer who had

\* Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit. I 47.

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turned cleric, or at least Bible-poet, but who had retained his ancient predilection for heroes and arms" (Ten Brink).

**Daniel:** an indifferent and colourless rendering, homiletic in purpose.

**Judith:** a magnificent fragment containing about a quarter of a poem of epic grandeur; half heathen, half Christian; gives a fine portrait of the heroine, the "maid of the Creator," more varied and more profuse in detail than usual; the martial theme handled with brilliant power; a very favourable specimen of Anglo-Saxon verse; composed possibly in honour of Æthelfleda, the Lady of the Mercians: if so belongs to early tenth century; certainly not by Cædmon.

(b) **The School of Cynewulf:** Nothing certain known of Cynewulf except his name, preserved as a signature in runes to four poems; probably a Northumbrian of the eighth century: this probability based on general grounds only, e.g. the scenery of the poems, the knowledge of the sea, the sad tone as of a man who felt the basis of social order slipping away (which was *not* the case in Mercia and Wessex, 750-800), also on the known existence of a poetic school in Northumbria, but not in the South; a man of considerable learning and accomplished poetic skill; religious in feeling; lyrical and intensely subjective in many places; possibly a scop who spent a wild youth and wrote his poems in a repentant old age.

The four signed poems are:—

**Crist:** a long poem in three parts dealing with Christ's birth, ascension and second coming; derived not from the gospels merely but from various Latin sources, notably the writings of Gregory the Great; nevertheless a great original poem, the work of a conscious artist, full of a fine religious passion; reveals the poet's personality—"a man of sorrows who has found peace" in the Cross.

**Juliana:** the legend of a saint and martyr under the Emperor Maximian.

**The Fates of the Apostles:** a comparatively poor work.

**Elene:** Cynewulf's masterpiece; in fourteen cantos, with a fifteenth containing an invaluable personal reference to the poet; describes the voyage of Helena in search of the true Cross, her discovery of it, the consequent conversion of Constantine and his victory over the Huns; animated by high religious purpose; strengthened by imaginative descriptions, heroic combats, lyrical passion and a poetic feeling for nature; unites Teutonic force, Celtic delicacy of feeling and a Christian seriousness.

Important poems which have been attributed to Cynewulf and which belong to the same school of thought at least are:

**The Dream of the Rood:** almost certainly his, though only internal evidence available; describes how the poet found peace

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and happiness through a vision which revealed the beauty and power of the true Cross.

**Andreas**: very probably his, from its association [with the *Fates of the Apostles*] which has been thought to be its epilogue; is in two parts: the imprisonment of Matthew among the Mermesonians, and Andrew's voyage to support him; lacks the personal note of the Cynewulf mood; deals in the old epic spirit with the external aspect of things; especially fine in its sea pieces.

**Guthlac**: has in places the Cynewulfian note; first part tame and inferior; second part in Cynewulf's best manner combines the triumphant spirit of Beowulf with true Christian feeling; the original is Latin, though Guthlac was an English saint.

**The Phœnix**: the climax of Old English descriptive and reflective poetry; the legend of the phœnix made into an allegory of the resurrection; its pictures of scenery and sunshine really beautiful; improves the Latin original of Lactantius (third century) almost out of recognition.

**Riddles**: a characteristic form in the eighth century; some of Cynewulf's translated from Aldhelm (p. 7) and other Latin originals; deal in an enigmatic way with natural and familiar objects; often poetical and skilful; probably the work of the poet's early life as a scop.

(c) **Poems not classified**: (i) A number of elegies which are nominally Christian seem to belong to an earlier date, at least in their original conception. Such are *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Husband's Lament*, *The Wife's Complaint*, *The Ruined Burg*. They show a less hopeful tone of resignation to evil days than Cynewulf, and none of the rapture of faith of Cædmon's school. They are almost despairing plaints of glories gone, with an intense power of describing wild nature.

(ii) Two magnificent battle pieces are preserved in the Chronicle (p. 16): viz. *The Battle of Brunanburh* (937), familiar in Tennyson's modernized version; and *The Battle of Maldon* (991), recounting the Homeric conflict between Earl Brythnoth and the invading Danes, the last flash of the old English spirit in verse. After this English poetry dies out: only a few insignificant verses have come to us in English during the two centuries 1000-1200.

(d) **Manuscripts**: The chief MSS containing Anglo-Saxon poems are:—

(i) *Beowulf* exists in one MS only, in the Cottonian collection of the British Museum; first noticed, 1703; first transcribed, 1787, and published, 1815; edited and printed in facsimile by Zupitza, 1882. Other editions since. Translated into modern verse by William Morris and A. J. Wyatt, 1898.

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(ii) *Genesis, Exodus, Daniel, Crist and Satan* in a single MS Junius XI, in the Bodleian ; first edited by Junius, 1655.

(iii) The "Exeter Book," given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric, 1071 ; edited by Thorpe, 1842 ; and (with translations) by Gollancz, 1895 ; contains, among other poems, *Crist, Juliana, Guthlac, The Phœnix, Widsith, Complaint of Deor, The Wanderer, The Seafarer, Riddles, Gnomic verses* and parts of an O.E. *Physiologus*.

(iv) The "Vercelli Book," found in a library at Vercelli in Lombardy, 1822 ; contains (with homilies and other prose) *Andreas, The Fates of the Apostles, The Dream of the Rood and Elene*. The MS is dated (probably) in the eleventh century : edited (with translation) by J. M. Kemble, 1843-56.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ANGLO-SAXON VERSE

Anglo-Saxon verse is a kind of blank verse, without rhyme : only in one case, *The Complaint of Deor*, does it fall into imperfect stanzas, each closed by a refrain.

Each line is sharply divided into two half-lines, which are connected together by alliteration. Each half-line has its own independent rhythmical scheme, and normally carries two accented syllables ; alliteration always falls on words which bear the rhythmical stress, never on unemphatic words ; but all the stressed words of a line are not joined by alliteration. The number of syllables in each foot varies very widely, and the movement may be either trochaic or iambic, or both in the same half-line. This gives a certain variety to the verse movement ; but the best examples of Anglo-Saxon verse do not escape the impression of a mechanical monotony ; for the finer effects of poetry, the alliterative principle is a poor instrument. It strikes out vivid phrases, but cannot maintain the complex rhythm of a paragraph.

Nor are the Anglo-Saxon poets rich in metaphors and other figures of speech ; the simile occurs rarely ; the metaphor, when used, is simple and obvious—e.g. "wordhord onléac" = "unlocked the word-hoard" (*Widsith*) ; "mere-stræt" = "ocean" (*Beowulf*). The poets are also fond of expressive compound words, e.g. searogrim (grim in battle), gold-hwæt (gold greedy).

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The favourite device for attaining variety in diction is the synonym, e.g. in *Judith*—“Genam ða wundenlocc, Scyppendes mægd, scearpne méce” = “The curly-haired one, the maid of the Creator, took a sharp knife.” A large number of such synonyms, referring to God, the king, the lord, the warrior, etc., occurs. Thus the King in *Judith* is described variously as “the folk-leader,” “the wine lord,” “the giver of treasure,” “lord of earls,” “elder of the city,” “chief of the shield-warriors,” “prince of heroes,” “the gold-giver,” “gold-friend of heroes,” etc.

## D. Anglo-Saxon Prose

Prose was of later development than poetry, and was a West-Saxon product. Before Alfred's time laws had been written down, notably under Ine of Wessex (688–726) and Offa of Mercia (757–96); the Chronicle had been begun; but no worthy language in prose had been formed. Scholars like Bede had written in Latin, but the raids of the Danes killed Northumbrian scholarship by destroying its centre, the monasteries: at Alfred's accession, as he tells us, no scholar, cleric or lay, could be found capable of reading the mass-book.

(a) **Alfred the Great : Life.** Son of King Ethelwulf; born at Wantage, 848; taken to Rome, 855; his father marries Judith, daughter of the King of the Franks, 856; fights against the Danes at Ashdown, 871; succeeds Ethelred as king, 871; Guthrum attacks Wessex, 876; Alfred at Athelney, 877; defeats Guthrum, and makes peace, 878; rules peacefully the South of England, 878–92; new Danish invasions, 892–6; builds a fleet and defeats the Danes, 897; dies, 900 or 901.

**Influence.** Established Wessex as the nucleus of a unified England; reformed the laws; encouraged religion and learning; wrote and translated, and encouraged others to do so; brought Wessex into connexion with European civilization; brought over Grimbald, a monk of Flanders, to teach his “learning-knights.” Rightfully regarded as the “father of English prose.”

**Works.** Written partly by himself, partly also by others under his guidance; do not show original genius; but, though translations, have a distinct personal factor; the king often expresses his own views; his prose clear and unadorned, not without

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humour ; strongly didactic and religious in aim ; the dates and order of composition uncertain.

**Translation of Orosius' Histories** : the original (418), compiled under the influence of St. Augustine, a compendium of universal history from the Christian point of view ; translation imperfect and compressed ; episodes added when interesting, e.g. the spirited narrative of the Voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan.

**Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica** : not very satisfactory.

**Translation of Boethius** (p. 7) : a free rendering of the most famous prose work of the Dark Ages ; valuable especially for the expanded expositions which throw light on Alfred's own thoughts and aims.

**Translation of Gregory's Cura Pastoralis** : especially valuable for its preface, giving an account of the condition of learning in England—"the first important piece of prose in English" (Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit. i 92).

The Code of Laws, composed c. 890 ; with an introduction and Ine's laws as well as Alfred's ; influence of the Mosaic law to be noted.

Various works, probably not by Alfred, are ascribed to his influence : translations of Augustine's *Soliloquies* and Gregory's *Dialogues* ; a West Saxon *Martyrology* ; a collection of *Proverbs* ; a *Psalter*.

**Appreciations.** "He found learning dead and he restored it ; education neglected, and he revived it."—Monument to Alfred at Wantage.

"The first to give to his people a national prose literature."—TEN BRINK.

(b) **The Old English Chronicle**: A narrative of English history unique in the vernaculars of Europe ; probably begun by Alfred ; continued to 1154. The language simple and clear ; frequently no more than a bare summary ; sometimes a vivid and stirring narrative, the work of an accomplished writer ; the reign of Alfred (especially the years 893-7), the period 910-24, the troublous times of Ethelred, the revolt of Hereward and some incidents of Stephen's reign are examples of the chronicler's best work ; occasionally, as in 937 and 991, a poet took up the pen. It is an invaluable historical document.

There are five important recensions of the Chronicle : (i) The Winchester Annals, transferred to Canterbury, c. 1050-70 ; (ii) the shorter Abingdon Chronicle, compiled about 977 ; (iii) the longer Abingdon Chronicle, with entries up to 1047 ; (iv) the Worcester or Evesham Chronicle, a copy of (i) with additions principally relating to Mercian and Northern affairs and extending as far as 1079 ; (v) the Annals of Peterborough, written

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to compensate for the destruction of MSS at a fire in 1116 : based on a lost Kentish Chronicle, it is complete down to 1121, then goes on unevenly to its last entry in 1154.

(c) **Religious Prose**: Alfred's educational work was not permanent. Except for the Chronicle, English literature is a blank for 60 years. With the accession of Edgar (959), the influence of Dunstan prevailed ; the Benedictine rules were enforced in the monasteries ; true religion and learning revived ; schools were established, those at Winchester and Abingdon being most famous.

**Ethelwold**, abbot of Abingdon, bishop of Winchester (963), a pupil and disciple of Dunstan, made an English version of the Benedictine rule.

The **Blickling Homilies**: a collection of 19 homilies, in a simple hortative prose, were probably inspired by the new impulse ; nothing is known of their authorship, but they seem to date from 970-5 ; they received their name from the location of the single MS at Blickling Hall, Norfolk, but they are almost certainly of West Saxon origin.

**Ælfric** (?955-?1023) : the greatest prose writer in Old English ; born, c. 955 ; a pupil of Ethelwold's ; sent to Cerne Abbey as teacher, 987 ; wrote his first *Homilies*, in two series of 40 each, 990-4 ; wrote educational works—a Latin grammar and glossary, a *Colloquium* or dialogue between teacher and pupil, and possibly an astronomical treatise, *De temporibus* ; produced the *Passions of the Saints*, a new set of homilies, c. 996 ; translated parts of the Old Testament at the request of the ealdorman Ethelweard, 997-1000 ; wrote a pastoral letter (*Canones Aelfrici*) for the bishop of Sherborne, 998 ; became abbot of Eynsham, 1005 ; wrote in Latin *Vita Aethelwoldi*, 1006 ; at Eynsham wrote a number of doctrinal tracts to various noblemen, including one on the Sevenfold Gift of the Holy Spirit, another on the Old and New Testament, and translations of various works of St. Basil ; wrote also a pastoral letter (*Sermo ad Sacerdotes*) for Wulfstan, archbishop of York, 1014-16 ; and died in obscurity sometime later than 1020.

The prose of Ælfric is superior to Alfred's ; the weapon is more polished, and he can use it with ease and eloquence ; he is able to express difficult ideas, as well as compose a simple narrative. Latin influences are felt in the diction. In his later works, he becomes more florid, and indulges in alliterative and half rhythmic prose, no doubt for the sake of the immediate effect on an imperfectly educated audience. As a man he was simple, unambitious, pious, with a genuine love for religious learning. His influence was great, both through what he accomplished and what he inspired. He was not an original writer, but made available to others the best ideas of his time.

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**Wulfstan**, archbishop of York (1002-23) : a friend of Ælfric's, wrote homilies in a hard, definite, sledge-hammer style ; the best known is the *Address to the English*, in which he takes Englishmen to task for the evils of the time. The same theme is developed in his *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*.

**Bryhtferth** (*fl.* 980-1000) : another disciple of Dunstan's, wrote on Mathematics ; his *Handboc* is interesting evidence of the learning of the time ; his mind leaned to science more genially than to homilies.

**English versions of the Gospels** were made on three different Latin MSS during the tenth century. The Lindisfarne Gospels, copied about 700, have an interlinear translation in Northumbrian dialect, made about 950 ; the Rushworth MS has a similar interest in connection with the Mercian dialect ; a West Saxon gloss also dates from *c.* 1000 and was once thought to be Ælfric's work. The apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus was also translated : its popularity is important in connexion with Joseph of Arimathea and the Graal legend. Other apocryphal literature of the early Church passed into English about this time.

**Leech Books, etc.** The industry of the monks expressed itself also in medicine ; an interesting *Læce Boc*, full of queer prescriptions and superstitions, comes to us from the years 950-1000 ; an English *Herbarium* is of a little later date ; other recipes, formulæ and charms have come to us in large number.\*

Thus English prose was put successfully to a variety of uses ; but with the Norman Conquest the vernacular was for more than 150 years overwhelmed as a literary instrument. Nevertheless it did not die, thanks to the annalists of Worcester and Peterborough.

A link with the coming age is furnished by the appearance of the Eastern romance of Apollonius of Tyre in an English version, *c.* 1050.

### E. The Anglo-Saxon Language †

(a) **Origin** : Old English belongs to the Low German branch of the West Germanic branch of the great Teutonic tree of languages. Its nearest relatives are Old Frisian, and Old Saxon, in which a long poem, *Heliand* (800) has been preserved. The oldest piece of Teutonic writing is a partial version of the Bible by the Gothic bishop, Ulfila (311-81).

(b) **Peculiarities** : O.E. is difficult at first sight, but its study is much helped by a knowledge of German.

\* Cockayne : "Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft" (3 vols., 1864-6).

† For a full and careful history of the English tongue, see Emerson : *History of the English Language* (Macmillan, 1906).

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The difficulties arise from : (i) the complex system of inflexions ; (ii) the uncertainty of the spelling in MSS of different dialects and dates ; (iii) a vocabulary largely obsolete ; (iv) a crude syntax which makes the expression of any but the simplest ideas impossible.

(i) There are several declensions of nouns, which have unnatural genders ; adjectives are fully inflected ; so are the article *se* (the) and the pronouns ; adjectives have weak and strong declensions, as in German ; the strong verb, with its complicated gradation of vowels, is the prevalent conjugation, though there are many weak verbs. In short, O.E. is a fully inflected language.

(ii) Examples of this occur in one and the same passage : e.g. in *Judith*, we find the forms *hiera*, *hira*, *hyra*, *heora*, all used as the gen. pl. of *he*.

(iii) In two lines of *Judith*, taken at random, we have : *sweotole* (clearly), *sigerof* (eager for victory), *hæleth* (hero), *leode* (people), *ræswa* (chief), *lath* (hostile). Most of these words have been replaced by Latin equivalents ; few Latin words are found, and those mostly religious (*preost*, *bisceop*). A number of expressive short words are a loss to the language e.g. *rof* (brave), *lath* (cf. loathsome), etc. ; but the language needed words for the expression of complex ideas. The formation of compound words (*sigerof*) was a characteristic, now largely lost in the language, except in poetry.

(iv) The complex sentence is almost beyond the range of O.E. In any passage of verse the absence of conjunctions is noticeable, and with them the qualifying particles, *the*, *his*, etc. The final clause (*that* with subjunctive) is the most frequent of the subordinate types. Thus, O.E. did not lend itself to logical uses. A staccato effect is constantly present.

(c) **Dialects** : The standard dialect of O.E. is the West Saxon of Alfred and Ælfric, the MSS of whose writings are some of them contemporary. Most of the poems are also preserved in West Saxon, in MSS copied in tenth and eleventh centuries ; Northern peculiarities survive in many of them. Mercian is preserved impurely in the Rushworth Gospels (p. 18) and Northumbrian in the Lindisfarne MS. Only a few fragments of Kentish survive. The grammar of the dialects shows that the dissolution of the complex inflectional system had begun in the North and Midlands before the Conquest.

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(d) **Appreciations.** "There is a force, vitality, clearness and distinctiveness of portraiture, not only in Beowulf's personality but in that of all the other personages, which raise the poem into a high place, and predict that special excellence of special portraiture which has made the English drama so famous in the world. Great imagination is not one of the excellences of *Beowulf*, but . . . the poem is great in its own way, and the way is an English way. The men, the women, at home and in war, are one in character with us. It is our Genesis, the book of our origins."—STOPFORD BROOKE.

"The Anglo-Saxon was capable, and alone, of good prose on all practical subjects, of excellent and accurate history, of practical works on science; of close criticism; of religious, moral or philosophical discourse, touched often with a mystical, even an ideal quality; of a tender, deeply-felt religious poetry; of narrative poetry at disproportionate length; and he had a most natural and happy turn for popular love-songs. . . . By his dominance in all the qualities which make a free and settled national life, he secured, as a vehicle of literature, the English language. . . . The dominant note in the literature of these islands is the English note."—STOPFORD BROOKE.

"The Anglo-Saxon was the earliest vernacular Christian poetry, a dim prophecy of what that poetry might become in Dante and Milton."—MILMAN.

## CHAPTER II

### MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD, 1066-1360

#### A. Historical Notes

AN interesting period, full of changes and developments of great importance to Literature.

(a) **The Crusades** broke down barriers between East and West ; opened the West to the learning and customs of the East ; established the feudal codes of knighthood and chivalry ; led to the French romance and the Provençal love-lyric.

(b) **Revival of Monasticism** : The strict rule and high religious ideals of Cluny ; beginning of the Cistercians and Carthusians ; power of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) hostile to free thought and profane letters ; great influence of monks on the arts and education ; also on the general life of the clergy, and consequently on the Church as an institution. The Church under Hildebrand (Gregory VII : 1073-85) and Innocent III (1198-1216) at its greatest power (e.g. Becket's quarrel with Henry II : 1164-70).

(c) **Beginnings of the Universities**: The work of the 12th century; teaching of William of Champeaux (c. 1100-21) drew many students to Paris ; that of Abelard (d. 1142) drew many more ; the result was the formation of a college of Masters of Arts, which received its charter, c. 1200 ; a riot in 1229 led many of the scholars to England, where they pushed forward the embryo universities of Oxford and Cambridge ; the result was a more minute study of theology, philosophy (especially Aristotle) and the science of the Arabs, which culminated in the meticulous precision of the schoolmen.

(d) **The Friars** also did much for education and literature. The Franciscan order, founded in 1210, devoted themselves to the social side of their religion but produced many scholars (e.g. Roger Bacon). The Dominicans, founded 1215, were intellectual from the first ; their aim was to make Christianity reasonable to the scholar. **Albertus Magnus** (1193-1280) and **St. Thomas Aquinas** (1225-74), reconcilers of Christianity and Aristotle, greatest of the schoolmen, were Dominicans. Both orders were of great importance to the universities.

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Dominicans at Paris, 1217; at Oxford, 1221; Cambridge, 1274.

Franciscans at Oxford and Cambridge, 1224; at Paris, 1230.

(e) **The Feudal System** prevailed in England and France; but the formation of a strong central monarchy made literature national; poets, whether as troubadours or trouvères, were welcomed by many of the greater barons.

In England, William I, Henry I and Henry II organized the kingdom strongly, but they were essentially foreign rulers: the loss of Normandy (1204) and of Poitou (1242) threw the king more on to his English possessions; Magna Charta (1215) and the Barons' War (1264-5) commenced our system of popular government; the English language revived, c. 1200, but was not used officially before 1362.

## B. Literature under the Normans

**The Normans**, an energetic and virile race, acted as a tonic to the English; brought law, order and unity to a divided people; gave the English a strong sense of religion and a more cultured civilization; encouraged the monasteries and the learning associated with them. They united the activity of the typical Teuton with the culture of France; but gradually became English in spirit and ideals.

Their introduction of Continental culture preserved English literature from its drift into insular narrowness; literature became more mundane in its interests, more attentive to grace and harmony and less to edification; the romance and the lyrics of the troubadours came in from France, to give brightness and imaginative power to the English genius.

The English language slowly yielded to Norman influences, giving it a larger and more flexible vocabulary, and a simpler grammatical structure. During the strictly Norman period (1066-1154) there was little literary intercourse between the races. Three languages existed side by side: Latin, for the scholar; French, for the baron's castle; English, for the illiterate and subdued Saxon: even Henry II did not speak English, and was more a Frenchman than an Englishman. Yet in spite of this, English survived; and, when the national

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literature emerged again, it was English in spirit as well as in language.

## I. LATIN AUTHORS

(a) **Ecclesiastical** : The English Church strengthened by the appointment of renowned foreigners to its Sees.

**Lanfranc** (1009-1089) : an Italian of good family and great learning ; founded the abbey of Bec, 1046 ; archbishop of Canterbury, 1070 ; author of *Liber Scintillarum*, a polemical treatise on the Eucharist ; scholar and statesman, he gave a great stimulus to learning and religion in England.

**Anselm** (1033-1109) : also an Italian ; a pupil of Lanfranc ; prior of Bec, 1063 ; abbot, 1078 ; archbishop of Canterbury, 1093 ; quarrels with William II about the fiefs of the Church, and investiture ; comes to an agreement with Henry I, 1105 ; a subtle religious philosopher and a man of profound spiritual character ; wrote many important theological works, showing exceptional dialectical skill (e.g. *Cur Deus Homo*, *De Incarnatione Verbi*, *Monologion*, *Proslogion*, etc.) dealing with the rational basis of Christian belief in a Platonic style.

**Eadmer** (d. c. 1124) : a monk of Canterbury, friend and follower of Anselm ; wrote the trustworthy *Vita Anselmi* ; also *Historia Novorum*, an excellent story of contemporary events, especially on the ecclesiastical side.

(b) **Historians** : The best literary work of the monks was their Latin chronicles, invaluable as authorities, on account of their faithfulness. The monk not a mere recluse, but often in touch with affairs and the friend of great men. Generally the chronicle is not history in the modern sense, though sometimes we see an effort to make the narrative easy and pleasant to read. Bede was the model of most of them.

**Ordericus Vitalis** : born in Shropshire, 1075 ; became a pupil, and monk, at St. Evroul in Normandy ; wrote an *Ecclesiastical History* from A.D. 1 to 1141, about which date he died ; a valuable authority for our Norman kings, especially for the affairs of Normandy.

**William of Malmesbury** (d. c. 1142) : the greatest of this group ; a picturesque stylist as well as a genuine historian ; impartial, perhaps owing to his mixed Norman-English blood ; wrote *De Gestis Regum Anglorum* (449-1127) and *Historia Novella* (1127-42), besides a history of Glastonbury and lives of saints ; "the leader of a new historic school which treats English events as parts of the history of the

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world, and emulates classic models by a more philosophic arrangement of their materials" (J. R. Green).

**Henry of Huntingdon** (d. c. 1155) : not a monk, had not the patient drudgery required for original work ; his *Historia Anglorum*, though not a standard work, was long used as such ; it is a rather dry compilation.

**Geoffrey of Monmouth** (see p. 26) made history into romance.

Other chroniclers of some value to the historian are **Florence of Worcester** (d. 1118), author of *Chronicon ex Chronicis*, a compilation of universal history ; **Simeon of Durham** (*fl.* 1100-30), the most distinguished of the Northern school ; and **Richard of Hexham** (*fl.* 1120-50) an original authority for Stephen's reign.

(c) **Scientific Learning** was taken up eagerly, often in defiance of authority ; it was based upon the knowledge of the Arabs, radiating from Spain. There are works on mathematics and astronomy ; a translation of the Koran into Latin by Robert de Retines (1141-3) ; and many works on science and philosophy by **Æthelard of Bath**, author of *De Eodem et Diverso*, a philosophical dialogue.

## II. VERSE

(a) **Romantic** : The Normans sang a song of Roland on the battlefield of Senlac, but the epic of Charlemagne did not take root in England ; the method of the chansons de geste died out ; Normans lost touch with the French epos in general. Till Geoffrey of Monmouth awoke the national British legends, romance languished. Among minor French writers attached to the Normans we may mention **Philippe de Thaun**, author of a *Bestiaire* (1121) ; a certain **Benedeit**, author of the *Legend of St. Brandan* ; and **Geoffrey Galmar**, who wrote an *Estoire des Bretons* (lost), probably versifying Geoffrey of Monmouth, and an *Estorie des Anglais* (c. 1145), important as a foundation for Wace's *Brut* (see p. 27). Geoffrey wrote in short-lined riming couplets.

(b) **Native** : The eleventh century a period of decay. In the old alliterative style one fine poem, *Be Domes Dæge*, a kind of homily in verse, survives ; also a *Menologium* or poetical calendar ; and metrical versions of certain psalms. To the reign of Henry I belongs *Poema Morale*, "the lineal successor of the homilies of Ælfric," but in riming verse of fourteen syllables ; also a poem of the *Paternoster*, the earliest known English poem in the short riming couplet. Among the people as a whole, popular songs were still sung : the deeds of Hereward, Robin Hood, Havelok the Dane, were thus kept in the consciousness of Englishmen.

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## C. Flourishing of Romance

### I. FRENCH LITERATURE, 1154-1250

(a) **The Troubadours**, the singers of Provence; chiefly lyrists, singing the ideals of chivalry in verse of varied form; the first, William of Poictiers (1071-1127); noteworthy also are Bernard de Ventadour (1148-95), who flourished at the Court of Queen Eleanor of Poitou, and Bertrand de Born (fl. 1180-1200), politician as well as poet. Their conventions do not reappear in English poetry; but their grace and spirit passed to us through the Norman French.

(b) **The Trouvères** were the troubadours of Northern France; many of them Normans; some became the ambitious poets of the Romances. These developed in the Court-poetry of Norman poets, e.g. Chrestien de Troyes.

(c) Forms of verse naturalized in French were (1) the *lai*, a kind of lyrical tale, of Breton origin; (2) the *sirvente* or religious lyric; (3) the *fabliau*, a short popular and often spicy story in verse; (4) the *dit*, similar to the *fabliau*, but more sententious.

**Marie de France** (fl. 1200): was the best exponent of the *lai*, in which she versified various old Celtic legends; she lived much in England; and wrote an *Ysopet* or version of *Aesop*, as well as the *Lai de Sir Launfal*, the *Lai le Freine*, *Orfeo*, *Le Chèvreuil*, etc.—all in the purest French of her period.

(d) The fashion of romance gradually merged into that of allegory as seen in the *Roman de la Rose* (p. 42).

### II. THE "MATTER OF ANTIQUITY"

Latin poets became better known; e.g. Chaucer was familiar with Ovid, Statius, and Lucan, besides Virgil; Greek not studied, but the stories of the *Iliad* and of Alexander became very popular as the basis of romantic tales and legends.

(a) **The Troy saga**: Mediæval "knowledge" gained from two spurious "contemporaries" of the Trojan war: Dictys the Cretan (Greek) and Dares the Phrygian (Trojan). Dictys' work appeared first in the second century A.D.: that of Dares in the sixth. Many versions of each were made and the story grew greatly.

**Benoît de Ste. More** wrote his *Roman de Troie* in some 30,000 lines, and thus gave poetic currency to the legends (c. 1165); it is an excellent mediæval poem, but a picture of feudal chivalry, rather than of Troy; it gives special

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

emphasis to the story of Troilus and Cressida. Guido della Colonne wrote in Latin, with additions, a new account of the destruction of Troy which superseded Benoit's, 1287. Many other versions of this saga appeared, and it has been immortalized in English by Chaucer and Lydgate.

(b) **The Alexander saga:** Existed in the form of romantic legends in the third century B.C., in the pseudo-Callisthenes. This was reduced to Latin in the fourth century by Julius Valerius, and again in the tenth by Leo the Archpresbyter; it was put into German before 1125, and into French verse by Alberic de Besançon (fl. 1150-80). About 1200, the great *Roman d'Alisaundre*, written in Alexandrines, was produced by Lambert the Crooked and Alexander of Bernay. About 1300 appeared an English poem of *King Alisaunder* in riming couplets by an unknown poet. Other fragments were known to Chaucer; and right on to 1500 the legend was extremely popular in Scotland.

(c) Other tales, contes d'aventure, from Oriental and Byzantine sources had popularity, and some received an English dress: e.g. Flores and Blanchefleur; Amis and Amiloun; Parthenope, etc.

## III. THE ARTHURIAN LEGEND ("MATTER OF BRITAIN")

(a) **King Arthur:** General interest in his story aroused by Geoffrey of Monmouth's History, 1139; truly historical basis of Arthur's life very slender; legends concerning him current much earlier in Celtic countries—e.g. the story of *Kulhwch and Olwen* in the Mabinogion, and the Welsh Triads; a real person whose deeds became assimilated with Celtic myths—e.g. the Isle of Avalon = the Celtic Otherworld; the stories passed into Brittany and thence to France proper, where they became the nucleus of the world's greatest body of romance; other legends, originally independent, were fused with it; the Celtic origin reflected in the vague beauty of the setting: e.g. no location to be given to Broceliande, Lyonesse, Joyous Gard, etc.; but the externals and the tone of the romances essentially feudal and chivalrous.

**Geoffrey of Monmouth** (c. 1100-54): a cleric, possibly archdeacon of Llandaff and bishop of St. Asaph; also a man of the world, using literature to serve his own interests; author of the Latin *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1139): a summary of British kings from the legendary Brut to

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Arthur; half the book given to impossible accounts of Arthur's exploits; through this Arthur introduced as a hero of romance; hence the Arthurian legend is of Welsh origin, in subject-matter and in its literary appearance. But Geoffrey had his eye on the Norman Court as much as his people's traditions.

**Robert Wace**, a trouvère of the Court of Henry II, versified Geoffrey's History in the Norman French poem, the *Brut* (c. 1155); he added the story of the Round Table. Also recounted the "gestes" of the Normans in the *Roman de Rou*.

**Layamon**, a parish priest of Arley on the Severn (fl. 1200), rendered Wace's *Brut* into English, 1205; added many incidents and amplified others from the traditions of the humble peasantry of the Welsh border; wrote in a patriotic spirit for the edification of his countrymen, so that their stories should not be the monopoly of the courtly; set up Arthur as the "most Christian king," in verse which is often spirited and poetical, and always earnest. The *Brut* is also important as the first work of value in the vernacular since the Conquest; it is in the Old English alliterative metre, with occasional rime and assonance; has few French words, in spite of its origin; and shows the beginnings of those grammatical changes, the loss of many characteristic Old English inflexions, which the Norman Conquest set afoot. It is an invaluable monument of our language in its transition stage, as well as a very interesting poem.

Of the many poems in English dealing with Arthur, we may mention the *Morte Arthure*, an alliterative poem of c. 1350, by an unknown but real poet; and a riming poem of the same title, in which we meet the story of Lancelot and Elaine.

(b) **The Holy Graal:** Two sources of this legend, the very old Welsh legends of Peredur (Percival), and the Christian story of Joseph of Arimathea; first blended in the *Romance of the San Graal* of Robert de Borron (c. 1180), an Anglo-Norman knight; a little later by Chrestien de Troyes in the *Conte del Graal*; and about 1200 by a German poet of high genius, Wolfram von Eschenbach, in *Parzival*, who used another French version now lost. The story of Lancelot and Guinevere was united with the Graal legend in a long prose romance, *Lancelot du Lac*, famous for its references in Dante and Chaucer, and supposed to be the work of

## AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Walter Map, written to further the religious plans of Henry II. The hero of the graal-quest is now Gawain, now Percival, and later Galahad the son of Lancelot ; ecclesiastical influence was doubtless strong in this change.

**Walter Map** (? 1137-? 1208) : born on the Welsh border ; educated at Paris ; came to the Court of Henry II and became an itinerant judge, 1162 ; archdeacon of Oxford, 1197 ; author of *De nughis curialium*, a set of satirical stories in Latin on the vices of courts and clergy ; reputed author of the original "goliardic" verses, written round the character of a dramatic worldly bishop Golias ; associated with the *Graal* legend as the author of the Latin original of *Lancelot du Lac* on the strength of a MS reference : if so it is his honour to have joined the stories of Lancelot and the Graal to the Arthur cycle.

(c) **Tristram and Iseult** : A purely Celtic story ; first put into French verse (lost) by Chrestien de Troyes ; afterwards by two Norman poets, Thomas and Béroul (c. 1180) ; then in German by Gottfried von Strasburg (fl. 1200) ; appeared in a Northern English poem, c. 1300, the reputed work of Thomas of Exceldoune.

**Chrestien de Troyes** (fl. 1150-90) : the greatest of the French romancers, and the most influential ; wrote the *Conte del Graal* (part) ; *Tristan* (lost) ; *Erec et Enide* ; *Yvain* ; the type of the cultured feudal poet.

(d) **Gawain** : The most popular of the Arthurian heroes in England ; many poems on him, culminating in *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight* (c. 1370), the finest by far of Middle English romances ; the work probably of a Lancashire man, in the old alliterative verse ; lofty in tone, pious, yet full of the joy of life, excellent in descriptions ; less conventional than the French poems ; the work of a fine poet (see p. 34).

(e) **Merlin** : The enchanter whose early history is clouded with the vaguest traditions ; a reputed bard and magician ; linked with Arthur by Geoffrey ; the story versified by Robert de Borron (c. 1180), then transmuted into a long prose romance, which is the basis of a better English poem, *Arthur and Merlin* (c. 1300), in short couplets.

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## IV. ENGLISH ROMANCES

Certain romances of English, as distinct from British, origin are preserved ; most of them passed through the French ere they received their final form, and thus gained an uncongenial veneer of the chivalrous and crusading spirit. Such were the very popular tales of Sir Guy of Warwick and Sir Bevis of Hampton. Less adulterated is *The Geste of King Horn*, a comparatively short poem of date c. 1250, in short riming couplets; an unsophisticated poem, telling a legend of Norse or Danish origin, associated probably with the Isle of Man. Still more crude is the slightly later "lay" of *Havelok the Dane*, a story of the foundation of Grimsby ; full of the Viking spirit, and probably a bequest of the Danish rule in England : Havelok (Anlaf ?) becomes King of England and Denmark, like Cnut.

Thus English drew romances from various sources, and a very large body of them was written between 1250 and 1500. On the whole they delayed the growth of a strong native poetry ; they were long and tedious, conventional and often absurd ; they lacked individuality and touch with reality, and consequently fell under the scorn of a real poet in Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*. England did not produce a poet of the calibre of Chrestien de Troyes ; but Layamon, and the unknown authors of *Arthur and Merlin*, the alliterative *Morte Arthure* and *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight* were not wholly unworthy of their themes.

## D. Middle English Writers, 1200-1360

Middle English, that phase of our language in which the transition from Old to Modern English took place ; the language fluid and unsettled, varying very much according to time and locality. Three dialects survived, —the Northern, Midland and Southern ; by the time of Chaucer, the Midland, which was the language of London, had become the national standard speech ; writings in the other dialects more difficult, because more archaic, than Chaucer.

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The principal changes in the language which came about in M.E. were :—

(a) The levelling of inflexions ; simplification of declensions ; abolition of grammatical genders ; modifications of pronouns, including the adoption of the forms *she*, *they*, *them*, *their*; *the*, *that*, *this* no longer variable ; verbal forms approximate to the present ones (3rd pers. sing. in -eth survived later) ; participle and gerund reach the form in -ing ; syncope of *e* in pronunciation of inflected forms (e.g. *burned*, *burnt*). All this very gradual ; more rapidly in N. and Mid., because of Danish influence ; continuing a process begun before 1066, and little influenced by the French spoken by the learned.

(b) Changes in pronunciation and spelling : the former due to natural causes, the latter to the fact that the loss of a standard English compelled writers to spell as far as possible phonetically.

(c) Changes in vocabulary : very slow, in Layamon about 150 French words ; in all M.E. writings before 1250, not more than 500 ; about 12 per cent. of Chaucer French. French not much spoken except by the learned ; the church, the universities and the court responsible for most. The French used in England, after 1200, became a dialect and different from Parisian French. Used in legal and political work till the fifteenth century.

(d) By the fourteenth century English had become the native language of all : supplanting French as the language of literature and (largely) Latin as the language of scholarship. (*Cp. Ch. III, Gower.*)

## I. EARLY ENGLISH TRANSITIONAL WRITINGS, 1150-1250

(a) **Ormulum** c. 1200 ; the work of Orm, a monk of Lincolnshire ; paraphrases 30 of the Gospels of the day into verse ; very monotonous and uninspired ; written entirely as an exposition to uneducated people ; is lacking in all the graces of poetry ; its form, a fifteen-syllable line without rime or alliteration, but in an even iambic rhythm ; valuable for its scheme of pronunciation and spelling ; a piece of native work, showing no French influence and very few French words ; yet shows also that in the North Midlands grammatical changes had already gone far.

(b) Other poems of a didactic religious tendency are : (i) a version of Genesis and Exodus in short riming couplets (Midland, c. 1250) ; (ii) a Bestiary, possibly by the same author, founded on a Latin Physiologus, containing twelve stories of the lion, panther, eagle, dove, ant, etc., with suitable moral teaching ; (iii) other allegorical poems of less value ; (iv) religious lyrics, many of them based on Latin hymns : e.g. the *Luve Ron*, a mystic poem in stanzas by Thomas de Hales (c. 1240).

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(c) **The Ancren Riwle** (Rule of Nuns), 1237; a delightful piece of prose in Southern English; sometimes ascribed to Richard Poor, bishop of Salisbury; a set of rules for the guidance of three nuns living at Tarente, Dorset; a queer combination of pedantry and practical sense; the writer learned, but human; naïve and quaint; giving sensible advice on every-day matters—of dress, love, habits of women—even the keeping of a cat is discussed; a genial and pleasant book still. Other works with the same appeal, especially to women, are lives of St. Katharine and St. Juliana, and *Hali Maidenhede*.

(d) **The Owl and the Nightingale**, c. 1225; a bright and spirited poem in the form of a debate or contention; the author unknown, possibly one John of Guildford; in the dialogue the owl represents the ascetic and the nightingale the æsthetic attitude towards life; the poet, though serious in his purpose, presents both points of view with dramatic fairness; introduces to English a new kind of poetry, free from ecclesiastical bias; shows a real love of nature and considerable power of description; reflects the life of the southern country with human insight and sympathy, and some humour; gives glimpses also of the general life of the time. The metre is the short rimed couplet of four accents, and is exceptionally correct. The language is very free from French words (forty-one in all). The poem reveals a good poet, capable of dealing with human themes in a spirit of beauty: it is the best English poem of the century, forecasting the great qualities of Chaucer.

(e) **The Proverbs of Alured** were current in the twelfth century, but written out in the thirteenth: they are terse, popular sayings, occasionally religious, but generally of the shrewd type born of experience. A more witty collection comes to us from c. 1300 in the **Proverbs of Hendyng**, put together by an unknown poet.

Like (d) and (e) Layamon represents the emancipation of literature from purely religious themes, and its devotion to work of the imagination written for pleasure as well as edification.

## II. ENGLISH TRANSITIONAL WRITINGS, 1250-1360

**Tales and Legends.** To the years 1250-1300 belong *Dame Siris*, an oriental tale, vivaciously told in English verse of short lines; *The Land of Cockayne*, a fabliau treating monks and friars in a coarse satiric vein; and the *Vox and the Wolf*, the only attempt to transplant the very lively beast-epic, Reynard the Fox, into English. The famous *Gesta Romanorum*, used by Shakespeare in its later English form, was probably composed in

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England (in Latin) about 1290. The *Tale of Gamelyn* is later (c. 1350).

During these years also two collections of the lives of the saints were made: one at Gloucester (c. 1250-80), the other a little later in the North. Both are composite works in verse which rarely becomes interesting, but are historically valuable for the life of Becket and other native saints.

**Chroniclers.** The example of Layamon, of writing history in English verse, was not followed till the end of the 13th century; original chronicles still written in Latin.

**Robert of Gloucester** (*fl.* 1250-1300): author of a long *Chronicle* in long-lined verse, is little known personally; his poem is rather dreary, but patriotic: "England is a well good land, I ween, of all lands the best," he says in his first line; he drew from Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Malmesbury and other predecessors, but becomes an original authority of real value in the latter part; had personal acquaintance with events in the S.W. Midlands, e.g. the Battle of Evesham; could be picturesque and vigorous at times, and developed an excellent narrative metre suited to his theme.

**Thomas Bek of Castleford** (*fl.* 1320): composed a similar work, very long, in the Northern dialect, in short couplets; the history is carried to 1327.

**Robert Mannyng of Brunne** (*c.* 1260-1340): attached to the monastery of Sempringham in Lincolnshire, wrote in 1338 a free translation in English verse of a French chronicle written by Pers of Langtoft, an Augustinian canon at Bridlington; valuable for the reign of Edward I and for the wars in Scotland. Mannyng is better known for his *Handlynge Sinne* (1303), translated from the *Manuel des Pecheiez*, a French work by William of Waddington, a Northern Englishman who wrote for Normans who could not read English. The *Handlynge Sinne* is a series of stories in verse to illustrate the evil results of the various sins; the work of an excellent tale-teller; imaginative and vivid in detail; exhorts by example rather than precept; pictures the abuses of the time, and gives us a valuable picture of mediæval life; his serious purpose, however, did not obscure his gifts as a dramatic story-teller.

**Northern English.** The early fourteenth century saw a literary revival in the North of England.

**Cursor Mundi**, 1320, a long poem by an unknown author, deals with the history of the world from the Creation to

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Doomsday, in honour of the Virgin ; written in octosyllabics for illiterate persons, it was very popular ; homiletic in intention, and showing evidence of wide reading, it is bright, often picturesque, always humane.

The **Northern Psalter**, a rude version of the Psalms, belongs to the same period.

**Richard Rolle**, the hermit of Hampole, near Doncaster (? 1290–1349), was a wandering preacher, of very high repute for holiness of life ; wrote devotional and mystical works in Latin ; and the *Prick of Conscience*, a long, irregular and gloomy poem, having little grace of style but a ruthless earnestness which made it popular among religious men and women.

**Laurence Minot** (? 1300–? 1352) : a poet of a different kind ; probably a professional minstrel, attached to the circle of Edward III ; wrote spirited poems, violently patriotic, on contemporary events, e.g. the Battles of Halidon Hill, La Hogue, Calais, Neville's Cross, Winchelsea (1350), Guisnes (1352) ; ready and graphic verse, partly in rimed strophes, partly alliterative ; valuable for their patriotic sentiment, though lacking in refinement and generosity of tone.

**Southern English.** There was less activity here than in the N. and W. The language used shows less modification than that of the North ; consequently it is somewhat more difficult to read.

**Dan Michel of Northgate**, a cleric attached to the library of Canterbury, wrote the *Ayenbite of Inwytt* (Afterbite, or Remorse, of Conscience), 1340 ; translated from the French *La Somme des Vices et des Vertus*, a title which sufficiently specifies the contents ; allegorical and tedious ; possibly known to Chaucer (Parson's Tale) ; in the Kentish dialect.

**William of Shoreham** (*fl.* 1300–40) : also wrote in Kentish ; was vicar of Chart near Leeds (Kent) ; wrote poetic homilies on the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Virgin Mary, etc. ; in verse which is essentially lyrical—often light in touch and delicate in sentiment.

**Adam Davy** (*fl.* 1300) : a native of London, is known to us through a short poem in octosyllabic couplets, the *Dreams* ; the poem narrates five obscure visions, in which Edward II (as Prince of Wales) figured, perhaps intended as a warning to the young king.

**Lyrics and Songs.** The lyric note, so rare in O.E., is heard clearly in poems from about 1300. A sincere

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nature note, and a sense of beauty, is heard in "Somer is i-cumen in," the earliest true English lyric. The metres of the troubadours became familiar at the Court of Henry III (he married Eleanor of Provence); poets now sing of love and the joy of living (e.g. *Alysoun*); some mix English with French; many are religious: others show traces of folk-song in their refrains; a very pleasant sense of naturalness and ease in the music and rhythm is frequent. One famous collection of Lyrics is in the Harleian MS 2253 in the British Museum, dated 1310.

Songs, merging into ballad both in form and spirit, were written on political events. A Song on the Battle of Lewes, 1264, is the earliest known; others followed, and often took a satirical form. These political satires, however crude, took the side of the people against their oppressors; they touch clerical and social abuses with a free hand; from the unknown author of the *Song of the Husbandman* to John Ball and Jack Straw they use their rude vigour in a downright, frank manner, to awaken the people to a sense of their wrongs.

### III. REVIVAL OF ALLITERATIVE VERSE, 1340-70

In the W. and N.-W. of England a strong attempt was made to adapt the new poetical material to the old alliterative verse. This resulted doubtless from the fully-developed national sense which was completed by Edward III's conflicts with France, and was also in part a recognition of the comparative failure of the attempts to build a national poesy on the models of the French romance. At this period there are few writers of French in England.

**William of Palerne**, 1355, is the work of a poet who called himself William, of whom nothing is known; a translation of a French poem on a Sicilian romance; naive and artless; skilful in love-scenes and in pathos; careful in observation of human nature; eager to support virtue, courage and humility. At his best, the author approaches the narrative skill of Chaucer.

**Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight**, c. 1370, belongs to this school. In all likelihood, the same poet wrote the three following poems, which occur in the same MS, and have much in common with it, besides language.

**Pearl**, c. 1360, the gem of Middle English poetry before Chaucer, is a combination of elegy and allegory, showing the

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influence at once of Dante and the *Roman de la Rose*. Its metre is complex : there are 101 stanzas, each of twelve lines with interwoven rimes, suggesting the sonnet ; and there is alliteration throughout. The rhythm and music are exceedingly attractive ; the poet was an accomplished artist. He was probably a man of good birth, familiar with courts, but also deeply religious. His relation to his daughter, Pearl, suggests to every reader the analogy of Dante and Beatrice. In force of diction, in depth of mystical skill, in profound allegorical significance, in splendour of imagery, *Pearl* is superior to *Sir Gawayne*.

**Cleanness** is alliterative, without rime ; it enforces from scriptural examples the lesson of purity, in a sternly moral tone.

**Patience** is shorter and more vivid, but not less forceful. From its treatment it would seem to be the last of the poet's four works. Along with *Cleanness*, it is more unmistakably a hark-back to the older days than *Pearl*.

**William Langland** (or **Langley**), 1332-c. 1400 : the supposed author of *Piers Plowman* ; born in Shropshire ; educated at Malvern ; became a minor clergyman, but did not rise in the Church and remained a poor man to the end ; wrote the first version of his poem, 1362 ; came to London ; and revised the poem, with additions, 1377 ; made a third version, c. 1393 ; wrote (Skeat) *Richard the Redeless*, 1399 ; date of death unknown. These biographical notes based almost entirely on internal evidence ; as also his gaunt and gruff personality—the “Long Will” of literary tradition.

45 MSS of the poem exist : they are grouped into three divisions :—

(i) *The A text*, 1362 : contains the vision of the “Field full of Folk” (one prologue and four passus), the vision of Piers Plowman (four passus), and the vision of Do-wel, Do-bet and Do-best ; exceptionally vivid, terse and dramatic.

(ii) *The B text*, 1377 : contains the matter of the A-text, much enlarged ; details are expanded, and fresh examples added ; the whole poem is increased to twenty passus. The additions reveal the writer's wider knowledge of life, especially in London ; also a deeper reading and more intimate acquaintance with religious problems.

(iii) *The C text*, 1393 (Skeat)—1398 (Jusserand) : contains many alterations, most in the way of expansion and elaboration of points of difficulty in B ; compares unfavourably

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with A in direct literary appeal ; the author is now an older man, more pedantic and less imaginative ; his satire is more learned and less effective.

The differences among the texts have aroused doubt as to the single authorship of the poem. In the alterations B rarely improves and sometimes misinterprets A, as C does B. The additions do not seem to be the work of the same mind, as modified by experience or further knowledge. Moreover, at the end of the A text, "Will" is described as dead, and the poem finished off by a certain John Butt. Probably at least four poets were engaged on the whole poem : "Will," the author of the A-text, keen of observation and incisive of description ; John Butt, who finished off A ; the author of B, a cleric keenly interested in church abuses ; the author of C, who was rather concerned to tone down the satire of B without altering its general tendency.

Historically, the poem is of great value, giving us a picture of English life and the English people by one who lived and worked among them ; it shows us the conditions that produced Wat Tyler, John Ball, and Wycliffe ; but the poet is not himself a revolutionary or a reformer ; in *Piers Plowman* he sets forth an individual ideal : that of the plain honest worker and the unobtrusive piety of a simple soul, in contrast with the hypocrisy of the friars and the pomp of the bishops. Nowhere does he attack the Church and the Pope, except as these have fallen from their true duties.

The poem is an allegory representing a vision of the world as it is ; as a whole the picture is confused and depressing ; but in detail it is often very powerful : e.g. the description of the crowded scene in the first prologue ; the figures of Holy Church, Lady Meed, the Seven Deadly Sins, Piers himself ; the rat parliament, in B—etc. It lacks Chaucer's humorous and cultured touch, but atones by its earnestness and sympathy. It must have been extraordinarily popular. It crystallized the nation's thoughts.

Its language differs very little from Chaucer's, and contains as large a proportion of French words ; like

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Chaucer, it is written in the Midland dialect. In employing the old alliterative measure, however, it was using an obsolescent weapon, trying to do what was impossible. Consequently, beside Chaucer it seems an archaic poem.

The influence of *Piers Plowman* was very great and extended as late as the sixteenth century. Political songs in the bitterest vein of satire had long been widespread, but the figure and tone of Piers gave a deeper meaning to the literature of unrest. A few poems by unknown authors, inspired by Piers, are:—*Richard the Redeless (Mum, Soth-segger)*, an account of the misdoings of Richard II, 1398–9, has been ascribed by Skeat to the author of *Piers Plowman*; *The Parlement of the Thre Ages; Wynnewe and Wastoure; Peres the Ploughman's Crede*, ? 1393—a bitter attack on the friars in form reminiscent of Langland, but uncharitable in spirit: not a vision but a picture of a ploughman who beat the friars in his knowledge of the Creed; *Jacke Uplande; The Crowned King*, 1415; *Death and Liffe*; etc. The number and quality of these poems shows that, apart from French stimulus, there was a widespread poetic interest during the fourteenth century.

### IV. HISTORY—SCHOLARSHIP—THEOLOGY

(a) **Historians:** During the Middle English period, Latin remained the staple language of the Chroniclers. There was much activity in the local schools of the monasteries: the most famous, from its chief practitioners, was that at St. Albans. The verse-chronicles of Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne, however, show that the dignity of English was growing.

**Giraldus Cambrensis** (Gerald de Barri, c. 1147–c. 1223): born of a Norman father and a Welsh mother, in Pembrokeshire; united the interests of the two races; educated by the bishop of St. David's and in Paris; chaplain to Henry II, 1184; went to Ireland, 1185; wrote his *Topography of Ireland* and *History of the Conquest of Ireland*, valuable as the personal notes of a keen and sympathetic observer; joined in preaching the third Crusade in Wales, 1188; helped William Longchamp to govern England, 1189–92; yet never received any notable recognition; will be remembered for his interesting *Description of Wales* and his *Itinerary*; wrote also *Gemma Ecclesiastica* for the Welsh clergy, and many poems, letters and sermons. A lively, frank, unsophisticated writer, conceited, but without pedantry.

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**William of Newburgh** (d. c. 1200), **Roger of Hoveden** (d. c. 1200) and **Ralph of Diceto** (d. c. 1200) were full-length chroniclers, not attached to monasteries, but men of the world whose records become valuable in the reigns of Henry II and Richard I. Smaller chronicles of some interest are the monkish compilations of Jocelyn of Brakelond, immortalized by Carlyle in *Past and Present*, Gervase of Tilbury, and Richard of Devizes.

**Matthew Paris** (?—1259): the chief historiographer of St. Albans and the greatest of the Anglo-Latin historians, wrote a *Chronica Majora*, based partly on the *Flores Historiarum* of his predecessor, **Roger of Wendover** (d. 1236); he was a writer of wide views and commanded a picturesque narrative style; valuable for European as for English affairs during the reign of Henry III; critical and impartial; has preserved documents of great value.

**Henry Knighton** (d. 1366) is valuable for Edward III and **Thomas of Walsingham** (fl. 1420) deals with Wycliffe and the Lollards.

**Ralph Higden** (d. 1364) of Chester wrote *Polychronicon* (1352), an encyclopædia of all the available knowledge of the time, which had a wide circulation; was translated into English, 1387, by John Trevisa; whose version was printed by Caxton, 1482.

It is deplorable that so much of this work should have been written in dull and mediocre Latin. Middle English prose is a feeble instrument in comparison with the contemporary French, which produced Villehardouin's *Conquête de Constantinople*, Joinville's *Histoire de St. Louis* and Froissart's *Chronicles*—works which have literary charm as well as historical value. The years 1150–1250 were also the years of the Icelandic prose sagas in the prose *Edda* of Snorro and Sturla.

(b) **Learning and Theology**: For education men used Priscian, Cassiodorus, Orosius, Augustine, Jerome, Isidore, Bede, Alcuin, etc.; wide knowledge of Latin authors; Greek little studied; growth of interest in Aristotle during thirteenth century; much free-thought in the universities (Abelard, Arnold of Brescia); great influence of the Arab scholars—Avicenna (d. 1037) and Averroes (d. 1198), commentators on Aristotle, and Alhazen (fl. 1100), famous for discoveries in optics and

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mathematics ; growth of scholasticism—the application of logic and dialectics to faith ; much vain word-spinning ; official hostility of the Church—but note the charges against Boniface VIII (1294–1303) ; small progress in real knowledge till such men as Wycliffe defied the Pope.

**John of Salisbury** (c. 1115–1180): studied in Paris and Chartres, 1136–45 ; enters service of Archbishop Theobald, 1148 ; visits Adrian IV at Rome, 1155 ; secretary to Becket, 1162–70 ; bishop of Chartres, 1176. Author of *Polycraticus*, a treatise on government ; *Metalogicus* on grammar and logic ; *Historia Pontificalis* ; a life of Becket ; many letters. A scholar of wide learning ; a humanist ; a philosopher. “*Vir magnæ religionis totiusque scientiæ radiis illustratus*” [Monument in Chartres Cathedral].

**Alexander of Hales**, in Gloucestershire (d. 1245) : the “irrefragable doctor,” wrote a ponderous *Summa Theologiae*, the standard work of the Church ; Franciscan, and teacher at Paris.

**Robert Grosstête** (d. 1253) : first rector of the Franciscan school at Oxford, 1224–35 ; bishop of Lincoln, 1235 ; voluminous writer on theology, Aristotle, etc. ; friend of Simon de Montfort ; opposed excessive papal claims ; was the most powerful religious force in England before Wycliffe.

**Roger Bacon** (1214–92) : was educated and a teacher at Oxford ; taught in Paris, 1245–50 ; kept in seclusion on account of his opinions, 1257–67 ; released by Clement IV and ordered to expound his researches ; wrote in eighteen months his three great treatises, *Opus Majus*, *Opus Minus*, and *Opus Tertium*, 1267–8 ; wrote *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, 1271–2 ; attacks pedants, clergy and scholars, and is again put in confinement ; released to write *Compendium Studii Theologicæ*, 1291–2 ; his knowledge and the bulk of his writings enormous ; his real scientific vision obscured by the bigotry of his day ; his fame as necromancer and magician unfair to his genius.

Other Franciscans who obtained great repute were **John Duns Scotus** (d. 1308) who opposed Aquinas, and **William of Ockham** (c. 1280–1349) a strong supporter of Nominalism, in opposition to the Realism of the chief scholastics. The method of scholasticism survived at Oxford in the great reputation of **Thomas of Bradwardine** (d. 1349).

**Richard of Bury** (1281–1345) : studied at Oxford ; was tutor to Edward III ; envoy to Avignon, 1330 and 1333 ;

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dean of Wells, and bishop of Durham ; wrote *Philobiblon*, 1345, a book about books ; was one of the first writers who loved books *per se* ; collected a very large library at his palace at Bishop Auckland.

**John Wycliffe** (1320-84) : born at Richmond, Yorks ; went to Oxford ; became a teacher there, and master of Balliol ; was supported by John of Gaunt ; taught the scholastic theology and wrote much in Latin ; developed his own views slowly ; cited for heresy before the bishop of London, 1377 ; supported by the University ; appeared before the archbishop at Lambeth, 1378 ; the trial broken up by citizens of London ; denied transubstantiation, 1380 ; began to organize the itinerant preachers, 1381 ; began the translation of the Bible, 1381 ; was expelled from Oxford, 1382 ; retired to Lutterworth, his living since 1374 ; led a busy literary life, without interference ; died of paralysis, 1384.

**Latin Works** : *De Logica* ; *De Ente* ; *De Benedicta Incarnatione* (University lectures), 1360-70 ; *De Civilis Dominio*, c. 1374 ; *De Ecclesia* ; *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturæ*, 1378 ; *Trialogus*, 1382-3 ; *Opus Evangelicum*, 1384. Heavy and difficult, but containing a full development of his theological and political ideas.

**Translation of the Bible** : the first complete rendering of the Bible into English ; based on the Vulgate ; Wycliffe's style full of Latinisms and awkwardly literal renderings, but simple and clear ; only the New Testament his work ; the Old Testament (to Baruch iii 20) the work of Nicholas of Hereford, expelled from England, 1382 ; the whole revised after his death by John Purvey, a friend and disciple, whose English was better than Wycliffe's.

**Ideas.** He opposed the Church on the questions of papal endowments and transubstantiation ; laid stress on individual religion ; attacked abuses, and at the end opposed the friars. His views were popular, but he gave no countenance to the Peasants' Revolt. His views on government recognized the right of "dominion" if it were based on God's grace. He was the last of the schoolmen, a nominalist, and believer in the eternity of matter.

**Influence.** His work supported the antipapal tendency of his time ; inherited and extended the influence of Richard of Hampole ; cultivated the soil in preparation for the Reformation. His English followers (Lollards) were silenced by persecution,

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but he had a strong following in Bohemia under John Huss (martyred, 1415). As a writer he showed how English could be applied to new and dignified tasks, by his letters, pamphlets, tracts and sermons, as well as in his version of the Bible.

**John Trevisa** (1326-1412) : a Cornishman, and Fellow at Oxford : took part in the controversies and quarrels which prevailed there, and was expelled, 1376 ; seems to have shared Wycliffe's theological views, but ended his life as vicar of Berkeley, Glos. ; translated into racy, colloquial English two popular educational books—Higden's *Polychronicon* (p. 38) and the *De Proprietatibus Rerum* of Bartholomæus Anglicus, an English friar who was a professor at Paris. The translations are very readable and interesting ; literally made, in an English more free and idiomatic than Wycliffe's.

“**Sir John Mandeville**,” the supposititious author of a famous book of *Travels*, declared that he left England, 1322, and travelled all over the world till 1343 ; laid up at Liége with gout he says that he related his experiences on the advice of his doctor ; completed the book, 1357 ; earliest MS (French), 1371 ; afterwards translated into English and Latin, and became one of the most popular books in Europe. Both Sir John and his travels are a myth ; but the authorship is still a mystery. The book is a compilation from numerous sources, full of geographical and other absurdities, yet rich in interest and entertainment ; the work of a good scholar and simple-minded honest gentleman ; one of the most human books of the Middle Ages ; and the best piece of English prose before Malory.

## CHAPTER III

### CHAUCER AND HIS SCHOOL

#### A. Geoffrey Chaucer (? 1340-1400)

##### I. FOREIGN INFLUENCES

CHAUCER pre-eminently an English poet ; but susceptible to the attractive parts of French and Italian literature ; these foreign influences not exotic, but, ultimately incorporated inseparably into his native genius, served to bring out the best of his gifts, and did not misdirect them ; whatever he borrowed, except in his experimental stage, he made his own.

(a) **France** : Chaucer used most the courtly allegory, the beast fable, the fabliau ; could not catch the spirit of the lyrics ; had no sympathy with the romances, then past their zenith. In allegory, *Le Roman de la Rose* was the master-type ; the work of the two poets **Guillaume de Lorris** (c. 1230) and **Jean de Meun** (c. 1270) ; the first part, a complex allegory of love, courtly, chivalrous, prolix, elaborately descriptive, left unfinished ; the second part, satirical, coarse, witty, as if designed to throw the whole scheme into ridicule ; Chaucer as a young poet most influenced by Guillaume, later by the more realistic Jean ; his translation lost ; but its effect on him obvious in all his early poems. The beast fable culminated in the *Roman du Renart*, a French version of the cycle of stories concerning Reynard the Fox ; humorous ; satirical ; realistic pictures of life and character (*The Nonnes Prestes Tale*). The fabliau provided stories of everyday life ; often coarse, often clever, often skilful narrative (*The Reves Tale*).

(b) **Italy** : Here appeared the greatest poet of mediæval Europe—**Dante Alighieri** (1265-1322) author of the *Divina Commedia*, a pilgrimage through Hell and Purgatory into Paradise ; great in style, in thought, in passion, in poetry, in humanity ; the apotheosis of mediæval Catholicism ; pillory of all impostors and evil-doers ; a work of consummate genius, literary, ethical and spiritual ; influenced Chaucer indirectly by giving him a

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loftier ideal of poetry (but cf. *The Hous of Fame*) ; was a potent antidote to the artificial allegory of France. Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304-74), scholar, humanist, poet, was an apostle of culture as well as a pioneer of verse forms ; possibly met by Chaucer, 1368 or 1373 ; gave him the matter of the *Clerkes Tale* ; influenced him in his attitude to classical literature. More important to him was Giovanni Boccaccio (? 1313-75), author of the *Decameron*, a collection of tales, whose general plan suggested the *Canterbury Tales* ; also of *Teseide*, the original of the *Knights Tale* ; and of *Filostrato*, the original of *Troilus and Criseyde* ; a fine tale-teller, but not so great a poet as Chaucer ; the *Decameron* the beginning of modern prose fiction. Chaucer's two Italian journeys—? 1368, 1372-3—altered the whole character of his art ; poetry became a noble end in itself ; he recognized the necessity of reality and of suitable form, of seriousness as well as entertainment ; from a court poet he became a national and almost a European poet.

## II. LIFE AND WORKS

(a) **Life** :\* Little known of Chaucer's early years ; born in London ; date of birth uncertain ; son of a prosperous vintner in the City ; was well educated—possibly at Oxford or Cambridge, and Paris ; knew his Latin classics well (especially Ovid) ; had a fair knowledge of current philosophy and science ; was nevertheless a real Londoner ; is first mentioned in the accounts of the wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, 1357—probably a page ; accompanied the King to France and was taken prisoner, 1359 ; was ransomed at the treaty of Bretigny, 1360 ; is the King's *dilectus valetus*, 1367 ; and esquire, 1368 ; was probably married, c. 1366-8 ; was already celebrated for his poems and wit ; wrote the *Boke of the Duchesse*, on the death of Blanche of Lancaster, 1369 ; enjoyed the patronage of John of Gaunt ; went on an embassy to Italy, 1372-3, visiting Genoa and Florence ; appointed Comptroller of the Customs of London, 1374 ; went on several journeys abroad on public business ; lived at Aldgate, 1374-86 ; received a pension from the King, 1377 ; went again to France and Italy, 1378-9 ; received another appointment at the Customs, 1382, with the privilege of appointing a deputy ; wrote important minor poems, 1382-6 ; was chosen as Knight of the Shire

\* The dates here given are in many cases only probable.

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for Kent, 1386 ; on the fall of John of Gaunt, lost his offices and pensions, 1386 ; his wife died, c. 1386 ; on the loss of her pension, he became involved in poverty and debt ; made his pilgrimage to Canterbury, and started the *Tales*, c. 1387 ; appointed clerk of the King's works, 1389 ; was dismissed, 1391 ; devoted himself henceforth to his great work ; was awarded a new pension, 1394 ; it was irregularly paid, and the poverty of his life continued till Henry IV came to the throne, 1399, when his pension was increased ; d. 1400.

(b) **Works** : Fall into four groups : (i) Those in which French influence was paramount ; allegorical ; unreal and fanciful ; experimental on the metrical side ; conventional in tone and spirit ; e.g. the translation of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, c. 1368 ; *The Boke of the Duchesse*, 1369 ; *Compleynte to Pite*, c. 1370 ; Chaucer's *ABC*—a religious poem : (ii) Those written under Italian influences ; begun as valuable experiments in Italian metres, like *The Compleynte of Mars* ; *Compleynte of Faire Anelida and False Arcite* ; continuing in a broader, more serious strain, as in *The Clerkes Tale* and the *Life of St. Cecile* (second nun's tale), c. 1381 ; ending with *The Parlement of Foules*, 1382 ; *The Hous of Fame*, 1384 ; *Troilus and Criseyde*, 1385 ; *The Legende of Good Women*, 1386 : (iii) Those in which the native element is predominant, including most of the *Canterbury Tales*, 1387-1400 : (iv) Prose works : a translation of Boethius, c. 1381 ; a treatise on the Astrolabe, 1391, written for his "litel sone."

**The Parlement of Foules** : the first poem in which his special genius is fully seen ; written to celebrate the wedding of Richard II with Princess Anne of Bohemia, 1382 ; has the machinery of the popular dream-allegory ; in addition—a delicious humour, pleasant satire, unaffected joy in nature, vivid descriptions, effective verse ; tells of the wooing of a formel eagle (the Princess) by three royal tercels, in presence of Dame Nature and the parliament of birds, assembled to choose their mates on St. Valentine's Day.

**The Hous of Fame** : another allegory, represents the poet's journey to find the House of Fame ; was inspired by Dante, and contains plain echoes of him—e.g. in the prominence of

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Virgil; but has more than a streak of humour amid its seriousness; has also a different purpose; the poet finds life and reputation nothing but vanity, yet he will make it his mission to study and paint humanity as it is; the poem, unfinished, one of the most personal of Chaucer's works.

**Troilus and Criseyde**: a long narrative poem in the seven-lined stanza which he often used so skilfully (rime royal: ababbcc); based on Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, but a finer poem; the narrative and dramatic interest kept up; characters of Troilus, Cressida, Pandarus, drawn and developed with careful art; ornament and descriptive passages rich, but not overdone; ethical tone high; dedicated to the "moral Gower" and "philosophic Strode."

**Legende of Good Women**: possibly written to please the Queen, and to atone for his ungallant treatment of woman in *Troilus*; a series of stories, written in heroic couplets, exhibiting woman in her heroic constancy; the prologue a charming dream poem; twenty legends designed; only nine completed—those of Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle and Medea, Lucretia, Philomela, Ariadne, Phillis, Hypermnestra; based chiefly on Ovid and Virgil; interest not sustained, from the monotony of the theme.

**The Canterbury Tales**: supposed to be told by the pilgrims on their journey to the shrine of St. Thomas; suggested by the *Decameron*; more varied, but unfinished; a complete picture of mediæval English society and its interests; the poet a quiet humorous observer of his companions; Host Baily of the "Tabard" an officious master of ceremonies; the **Prologue** itself a masterpiece: describes the setting-out, and the pilgrims, with vivid wit, truthful observation and subtle humour; the pilgrims completely delineated in a few strokes; a mixture of all grades: chivalrous Knight, gentle Parson, hypocritical Friar, needy Clerk, pompous Lawyer, coarse Miller, grasping Reeve, etc.; satire and humour, appreciation and sympathy universal.

**Knight**: the model of chivalry and courtesy; tells the tale of Palamon and Arcite: a very fine poem—the flower of the chivalrous romance of love; in beautiful verse, with real pathos and rich descriptive power.

**Miller**: "A rude carl for the nones"; his tale, coarse, licentious, clever.

**Reeve**: "A slender coleric man," mean and suspicious; also tells a coarse fabliau, "steeped in harlotries."

**Man of Law**: "discret he was and of gret reverence"; was given the Christian legend of Constance, written much earlier; a sober story, told gracefully and seriously.

**Prioress**: a tender-hearted lady, inimitably described in the prologue; tells a pathetic and simple tale of a martyr-boy, with exquisite taste and feeling.

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**Shipman** : a rough, jovial fellow ; tells a spicy, lively tale.

**Monk** : a portly, good-humoured cleric ; his tale a series of tragic stories illustrating the misfortunes of the great (e.g. Lucifer, Samson, Hercules, Nero, etc.).

**Nun's Priest** : a jolly parson with a lean jade ; his tale the fable of the Cock and the Fox ; told with inimitable humour and grace ; has all the best qualities of narrative poetry—good dialogue, ready invention, considerable learning, keen characterization.

**Doctor** : a dignified physician who thought gold in physic was a cordial ; told the story of the Roman Virginia, taken from the *Romaunt of the Rose*.

**Pardoner** : a satirical portrait of complete hypocrisy ; his tale—a sermon on cupidity as the root of all evils—in keeping with him.

**Wife of Bath** : the sensual woman of the middle class ; her prologue tells the history of her life with five husbands ; delightfully garrulous, humorous, broad ; the tale cleverly told, but rather an anticlimax after the brilliant prologue.

**Friar** : another satirical figure ; his tale comic, but not fit for nice ears.

**Summoner** : a repulsive person ; but his tale witty and clearly told.

**Clerk of Oxenford** : an unpractical, dreamy student, without a benefice ; told the story of the patient Griselda, obtained from Petrarch ; a simple and pathetic story.

**Merchant** : a precise man “with a forked beard” ; a story of unhappy marriage, modernized by Pope, as *January and May* ; one of the least successful.

**Squire** : a young courtier, fresh as the rose, merry, a lover ; his tale deals with the magic and glamour of the East ; a splendid fragment ; learned, courtly, wise.

**Franklin** : a bluff country gentleman, of sound morals and good digestion ; his tale a Breton romance, of Arviragus and Dorigene ; generous in tone and sentiment.

**Second Nun** : told the Life of St. Cecile (see p. 44).

**Canon's Yeoman** : an intruder met by the way ; interposed a sordid tale of alchemy, to which his master was devoted.

**Manciple** : paraphrased a tale from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in brisk, easy narrative.

**Parson** : a venerable figure of the parish-priest who preached Christ's lore but first followed it himself ; his tale, in prose, a dull sermon on the Seven Deadly Sins.

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**Chaucer himself**, called on by the Host, began the *Rime of Sir Thopas*, a satire on the current romances; gravely imitated; checked, he tells the ponderous *Tale of Melibæus* in prose, extolling the virtues of the good wife Prudence. The poet described as elvish in look, serious and never merry, looking always on the ground, yet shapely in the waist!

**The Tale of Gamelyn**: ascribed to the Knight's Yeoman in some MSS.; a brisk tale of the greenwood, connected with the Robin Hood cycle and with *As You Like It*; probably not Chaucer's work.

**Later Minor Poems**: *Envoi to Scogan*, a fellow poet, on his hard circumstances; *Envoi to Bukton*—concerning marriage; *Balade de Bon Conseil*; *Lak of Stedfastnes*; *Compleynte to his Purse*—which drew recognition from Henry IV. Short poems with a plaintive humour in their lines.

(c) **Characteristics:** As a poet Chaucer united the strength of England with the grace and worldly touch of France, and the serious art of Italy; thus became the father of modern English poetry; a master of many metres; his diction easy, natural, liquid; has had no superior as a narrative poet; dramatic in genius; a great gift of humour; no skill in lyrics; the *Canterbury Tales* epic in conception, but imperfect and incomplete; his thought did not reach the highest flights: he re-echoes much of the wisdom of Virgil, Boethius, Dante and the great schoolmen, but is not original; his satire kindly and genial, but scathing against hypocrisy; his sympathies broad and human; too fond at times of broad and licentious farce (but cf. Boccaccio); his religion that of the Church, influenced by Wycliffe; piety genuine, but no reformer's zeal; a man of the world writing for all who are interested in human nature; his influence immense, felt by all great English poets after him. As a man—a mixture of the scholar with the courtier and politician; loved books and "corny ale"; could not take care of his money; was not interested in his Customs work; yet must have been a trustworthy diplomatist; attached to the fortunes of John of Gaunt. Convinced of the worthlessness and transitoriness of human joy and fame, he sought them to the end.

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(d) **Appreciations** : " Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry, he is our ' well of English undefiled,' because by the lovely charm of his diction, the lovely charm of his movement, he makes an epoch and founds a tradition. . . . The substance of Chaucer's poetry, his view of things and his criticism of life, has largeness, freedom, shrewdness, benignity ; but it has not this high seriousness " (i.e. of the classics).—

M. ARNOLD.

" We find more and more as we study him that he rises quietly from the conventional to the universal, and may fairly take his place with Homer in virtue of the breadth of his humanity." —LOWELL.

" He is a perpetual fountain of good sense, learned in all sciences, and therefore speaks properly on all subjects." —DRYDEN.

" In all his works he excelleth all other writers in our English." —CAXTON.

## B. Contemporaries and Successors of Chaucer

**John Gower** (*c.* 1330–1408) : a man of whom little is known ; apparently of good position ; a well-to-do landowner (or merchant?) ; intimate with King Richard II, later with Bolingbroke ; his last years spent at Braxted, Essex, as clerk of the living ; buried at St. Mary Overy (now Southwark Cathedral). Probably wrote in early life the *Cinquante Balades*, love-poems in Norman-French ; in the same dialect wrote *Speculum Meditantis* (*Mirour de l'Omme*), a long poem dealing with the sins of man and religion ; in Latin elegiacs wrote *Vox Clamantis*, inspired by Wat Tyler's rebellion, 1381 ; turned to English, influenced probably by Chaucer's success, in *Confessio Amantis*, *c.* 1385–93 : a long poem on the Seven Deadly Sins ; containing stories of love in illustration of the vices of the time ; a strange mixture of Ovid and the Christian moralist. Gower was a fluent, easy versifier ; told a tale straightly ; without humour ; without creative genius ; a good imitator of the ideas and methods of

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others ; not without charm, but never great. His relations with Chaucer appear not to have been wholly friendly.

**John Lydgate** (c. 1370–c. 1447) : a native of Suffolk ; a Benedictine monk of Bury ; in early days addicted to “vain pleasures” ; an industrious man of letters ; a voluminous poet, devoted to Chaucer, whom he generously eulogized and imitated ; also in touch with contemporary French literature ; author of *The Storie of Thebes*, c. 1415 (?)—a new Canterbury tale, continuing and completing the legend of Thebes begun in the Knight’s tale : in heroic couplets, too easy, diffuse and uninspired ; *The Troye Book*, c. 1420—a very long poem, telling the whole Troy story as it was then known ; *The Falls of Princes*, c. 1423–33—a vast poem in nine books, telling with suitable moral warnings all the sad tales of the world since the fall of Adam : a glorified Monk’s tale : in seven-line stanzas : his best work ; many occasional poems written to order ; a few short poems—e.g. *London Lickpenny*, showing a sense of humour. Never great ; had no artistic sense ; wrote too much and apparently never revised.

**Thomas Occleve** (c. 1370–post 1448) : probably a native of London ; employed early in public offices ; confesses to a riotous youth in *La Male Règle de T. Hoccleve* ; a friend and devoted disciple of Chaucer ; a portrait of Chaucer preserved among his MSS ; chief work, *The Gouvernail of Princes*, 1411–12—a paraphrase of *De Regimine Principum*, written by a Roman scholar named Ægidius for Philip the Fair : done for the benefit of Prince Henry ; not an interesting work.

**Henry Scogan** may be mentioned as another devotee of Chaucer ; and **John Shirley** as his admiring editor : neither has left any notable work of his own.

### C. Scottish Poetry

The language of the Lowlands similar to the English, i.e. Anglo-Norman ; intercourse must have been fre-

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quent ; kindred themes and metres in the poems ; influence of Chaucer paramount during the fifteenth century. Note also beginning of patriotic national ballads.

**Huchown**, supposed generally to be Sir Hugh of Eglintoun (c. 1320-80) ; mentioned by Andrew of Wyntoun as author of the *Pystel of Swete Susanne*, an alliterative poem in rimed strophes ; *The Great Gest of Arthure*, not preserved ; and the *Awntyre of Gawaine*, also lost : possibly the alliterative *Morte Arthure* (p. 27)—a robust and spirited poem—is identical with the *Great Gest*.

**John Barbour** (1326-96) : archdeacon of Aberdeen (1357) ; went to Oxford and Paris ; was a competent scholar, acquainted with Latin and French literature ; famous for his *Brus* (c. 1377) : an historical poem in the form of a romantic epic ; in octosyllabic couplets ; spirited and patriotic narrative ; written under the influence of the patriotic national songs ; popular and natural, without the artificial graces of poetry ; a good story, with strong human interest and sane view of life ; with occasional passages of real dignity—e.g. the appeal to Liberty. The *Buik of Alexander* is also regarded as his by some writers ; also, on less ground, two poor fragments of a *Troye Romance* and a collection of *Legends of the Saints*.

**Andrew of Wyntoun** (fl. 1360-1425) : prior of St. Serf's on Lochleven, 1395 ; completed his *Original Chronicle*, 1420-4 ; had no great poetic power, but shared Barbour's patriotism ; his chronicle a naive history of Scotland from its originals ; credulous and legendary ; but often valuable.

**Blind Harry** (Henry the Minstrel : fl. late XVth cent.), a Scottish peasant who probably sang his long poem in fragments in noble halls ; his *Book of William Wallace* inferior to Barbour's *Brus*, in poetic skill and historic value ; yet a true folk-epic ; rude and vigorous ; burning with hatred of Englishmen and truculent patriotism ; a romance of the *chanson de geste* type.

**King James I** (1394-1436) : son of the weak Robert III ; sent to France to be educated, was captured and imprisoned in England, 1405 ; went with Henry V to France, 1420 ; fell in love with Lady Jane Beaufort at Windsor ; was married at St. Mary Overy, 1424 ; returned to Scotland and was crowned at Scone, 1424 ; ruled harshly and was murdered, 1436. Author of the *Kingis Quair* (King's Book) : an allegorical poem in rime royal, imitated from Chaucer ; probably tells his own love-story ; dreamy, artificial, with many echoes of Chaucer's amorous poems ; has touches which show a genuine love of nature and sincere feeling. *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, *Feebles to the Play*, *Balade of Good Counsel* have also been ascribed to him, in all probability erroneously.

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**Robert Henryson** (*fl.* 1440-1500) : was made a member of Glasgow University, 1462; was a school-master and public notary at Dunfermline; was certainly dead in 1508. A student of Chaucer, with gifts of his own; more realistic than his master; a forceful narrator, concise, pointed, witty; dramatic moralist. *The Testament of Creseid* continues Chaucer's poem and invents a sad fate for Cressida; *Orpheus and Eurydice* imitates Chaucer's classical manner and his rime royal, with less success; *Robyne and Makyne*, the first English pastoral, is an interesting story of love, in true pastoral spirit; best of all are the *Fables* (? 1470-80), in which his dramatic, narrative and descriptive talents are all evident: the thirteen tales are told with a brisk and pleasant gaiety which atones for the moral at the end.

**William Dunbar** (*c.* 1460-*c.* 1525) : educated at St. Andrews, took his M.A., 1479; led a wandering life as a Franciscan novice; became attached to the Scottish Court; went to London for James IV, 1501; celebrated his marriage with Princess Margaret in *The Thrissil and the Rois*, 1503—a graceful adulatory poem; *The Goldyn Targe*, printed, 1508—a Chaucerian allegory, elaborately setting forth the "armour of reason against importunate desire"; *The Lament for the Makaris*, 1508, a half humorous elegy written when he was sick, interesting also for its references to dead poets; *The Dance of the Sevin Deidly Synnis*, ? 1508—his masterpiece—a satirical allegory, clever, witty, boldly realistic, with strokes worthy of Burns' poems of diablerie; a considerable number of small poems, in racy Scots; a large variety of metres; his humour tending to broad farce, rarely subtle or genial; never lofty but always forcible; a shrewd satirist; the greatest Scottish poet till Burns.

**Gawain Douglas** (? 1475-1522): younger son of the Earl of Angus; educated at St. Andrews and Paris; entered the Church and became provost of St. Giles, Edinburgh, 1501; wrote *The Palice of Honour*, 1501—a tedious allegory of the Chaucerian type; and *King Hart*, a similar poem relating the courtship of Dame Pleasance by Hart and his repentance in old

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age ; translated the *Aeneid*, 1513—a remarkable work, humanist in spirit, with fine descriptive passages in his prologues ; after the second marriage of Queen Margaret, was involved in political troubles ; became bishop of Dunkeld, 1515 ; went on various missions to England, and died there—an exile, 1522. His work not so strong as Dunbar's : more definitely Scottish in vocabulary, with occasional French and Latin neologisms ; a scholar, and a faint foreshadow of the Renaissance.

**Sir David Lyndesay** (? 1490–1558) : was also immersed in politics ; Court poet to James V ; chief Court herald, 1530 ; a supporter of Knox, 1547 ; a reformer and vigorous satirist of national abuses ; “the poet of the Scottish Reformation” ; a clear, manly and fluent writer, without Dunbar's vivid creative gift, but with more earnestness ; wrote too much, and without art ; his larger themes called for more knowledge and more leisure than he possessed. Of his poems the most famous are : *The Dreme*, 1528—an allegorical view of society ; *The Complaint of the Pabyngo*, 1530—a court satire, very audacious ; *The Satire of the Three Estates*, ? 1531—a morality play, performed before James V ; the *Historie of Squire Meldrum*, ? 1550 ; *The Monarchie*, ? 1551—a dream poem of an ideal state.

## CHAPTER IV

### FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE RENAISSANCE

#### A. General Characteristics

THE fifteenth century an age of transition ; a time of experiment in preparation for the new birth of learning ; the mediæval impulse worked out ; its stagnation and impersonality ; its general subservience to the needs and authority of the Church ; a broader ideal of culture already seen in Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer ; Italy the forerunner of the new humanism ; spread of its culture to its French conquerors, hence to England ; invention of printing and discovery of America helped the work begun by the study of Greek ; development of a wider interest in secular things—a love of beauty—a more sensuous art : aided by the growth of wealth, commerce and luxury ; all late in England ; but note the work of **John Colet** (1466–1519), dean of St. Paul's, as teacher of Greek at Oxford and master of Erasmus and More.

(a) **Italy** : Many of the earlier scholars, following Petrarch, wrote in Latin—e.g. **Æneas Sylvius** (Pius II, 1405–64), a powerful influence towards the Renaissance ; skilful verse was done in the vernacular ; but writers long preferred Latin. Note the services rendered by discoverers of MSS ; by **Poggio** (1380–1459) and **Filelfo** (1398–1483) ; by founders of libraries like Nicholas V (Vatican, 1447) and Cosimo de' Medici ; by princely patrons of arts and letters like **Lorenzo de' Medici** (1449–92) ; by critics and translators like **Lorenzo Valla** (c. 1407–57) ; by cultured poets like **Polizziano** (1454–92) ; by the broader system of education introduced in the universities. Note also the continuation of the example of Boccaccio in the novels of **Giovanni Fiorentino** (fl. 1378), **Massuccio di Salerno** (fl. 1470), **Cinthio** (1504–73), **Bandello** (1480–1561) ; the development of the pastoral romance in the *Arcadia* of **Sannazaro** (1498–1530) ; the revival of epic romance in the

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*Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto (1474-1533); the reflection of the political ideals of the time in the *Prince* of Macchiavelli (1469-1527), the historical writings of Gulcardini (1483-1540), and the *Autobiography* of Benvenuto Cellini (1501-71). Leaving Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo out of the count, the debt of the sixteenth century to Italy is seen to be a very large one.

(b) **France:** The great name is that of François Rabelais (1495-1553), author of the broad humour of Pantagruel and Gargantua; scholar, man of the world, kindly satirist, the genial friend of the human nature he laughed at. In poetry, the influence of the Renaissance appears in the poetry and criticism of the Pleïade: of whom two, Ronsard (1524-85) and du Bellay (1525-60), stand out for their influence on Spenser and other Elizabethans.

(c) **Erasmus** (1467-1536): Dutch scholar; a typical product of humanism; friend of Colet and More; learned Greek at Oxford; taught at Cambridge, 1510; edited the Greek Testament, 1516; a man of wide culture, intellectual, dispassionate; abused by Luther for his lukewarm protestantism; wrote much in Latin—notably the *Colloquies*, satirical philosophical dialogues; and *The Praise of Folly*.

(d) **Luther** (1483-1546): represents the religious side of the Renaissance; was a good writer of verse, and a great one of prose; his translation of the Bible (1521-34) a noble work: the first prose masterpiece in German; helped Tyndale and Coverdale; much other work—manifestoes, sermons, fables, table-talk, etc.—all in good prose.

## B. Prose Writers

### I. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

**Reginald Pecock** (c. 1396-1460): bishop of St. Asaph, 1444; an admirer of Wycliffe; tried to find a middle course in his *Repressor of Over-much Blaming of the Clergy*; his views too rational and lenient to the Lollards; forced to recant and deprived of his See, 1457; an enthusiast for "reform from within"; an agreeable personality.

**John Capgrave** (1394-1464): "Brother John," an Austin friar; prior of the house at Lynn; an historian, mainly in Latin, e.g. *The Book of the Noble Henries*; also in simple, clear English in *A Chronicle of England*, valuable for its information on the fourteenth and fifteenth century.

**Sir John Fortescue** (fl. 1400-80): Lord Chief Justice, 1444; took the Lancastrian side in the War; lost his place and possessions, 1461; fought at Tewkesbury and taken prisoner, 1471; restored to his estates by Edward IV. A learned scholar; wrote

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treatises in Latin on Natural Law and the Laws of England ; translated works of St. Augustine, Boethius and St. Thomas Aquinas ; remembered for his *Governance of England*—a sound and readable study of political theory, the first of its kind in English.

**The Paston Letters** (1422–1509) : a collection of letters which passed between various members of a well-to-do Norfolk family ; invaluable for their reflection of the everyday habits and ideas of ordinary Englishmen and women during the Wars of the Roses ; over 1,000 extant ; written in plain, rough, but workman-like style ; matter-of-fact and occupied entirely with prosaic details ; occasional letters from great persons ; one of the correspondents Sir John Fastolf, a relative of Margaret Paston ; four volumes published by John Fenn, 1787–9 ; a fifth volume by Frere, 1823 ; the letters carefully preserved, but for a long time the originals lost ; many rediscovered, 1865, 1875 ; with others that had come to light, edited with introductions by James Gairdner, 1872–5.

## II. CAXTON

**William Caxton** (? 1421–91) : a native of Kent ; apprenticed to a London mercer, 1438 ; moved to Bruges, 1441 ; became a successful merchant there ; was Governor of the English merchants in Flanders, 1462 ; met Edward IV, 1470 ; on the command of the English duchess of Burgundy, translated the *Recuyell des Histoires de Troyes*, 1471 ; caused this to be printed at Bruges, 1474 ; translated and printed the *Game and Playe of Chesse*—a moral, political allegory—1475 ; set up a printing press at Westminster, 1476, and printed the *Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers*, translated by Earl Rivers ; continued his work of translation with versions of the Dutch *Reynart the Foxe* ; *The Golden Legend* ; *The Eneydos* ; *Lyf of Jason* ; and other romances ; printed Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, 1485 ; Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, etc. His work gave enormous vogue to reading and writing ; his influence tending especially to romances —hence to the novel ; his own prose style not distinguished ; looks backward, not forward ; formless and uncertain ; his prefaces often quaint and interesting.

**Sir Thomas Malory**, author of the greatest book of the century, is quite unknown ; in spite of many con-

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jectures, no certain facts have come to light ; his *Morte d'Arthur* completed, 1470 ; printed by Caxton, 1485, with a preface in which he explains why, after printing lives of Charlemagne and Godfrey of Boulogne, he turns to Arthur ; not a translation or adaptation ; an artistic re-telling of the stories, based on many originals ; the whole unified by the tragic figure of Arthur ; in the best spirit of mediæval chivalry ; full of knightly deeds and brave combats ; told in a language poetic and artificial, but admirably suited to the stories ; the heroes realized with delicate touches ; its tone, courteous and manly, but not in accord with the highest standards in matters of love : the episodes of Lancelot, Elaine, and Guinevere convey the wrong moral attitude ; otherwise there can be nothing but praise for a book which is the quintessence of romance.

### III. THE RENAISSANCE IN PROSE

(a) **Humanists** : Men who, like Erasmus, brought the spirit of human culture into scholarship ; emancipated it from ecclesiasticism ; thought freely, and expressed their own individuality ; deemed literature a sufficient end *per se*.

**Sir Thomas More** (1478-1535) : the embodiment of the Renaissance in England ; scholar and statesman ; friend of Colet and Erasmus ; born in London, 1478 ; attached to the household of Cardinal Morton, 1491 ; at Oxford, 1492-4, where he studied Greek ; reader in Law at Lincoln's Inn, c. 1495-8 ; met Erasmus, c. 1498 ; under-sheriff of London, 1502 ; a Carthusian, 1500-4 ; married, 1505 ; elected M.P. in 1504, and successfully opposed the large grant for the dowry of Princess Margaret ; spent some time abroad, 1505-9 ; accepted into favour by Henry VIII, 1509 ; knighted, 1514 ; employed on diplomatic missions, 1515-23 ; *Utopia* (Latin version) printed at Louvain, 1516 ; Treasurer of the Exchequer, 1521 ; Speaker, 1524 ; Lord Chancellor, 1529-32 ; opposed the King on the Act of Succession, and executed, 1535. A man of high moral character ; witty, urbane, well-balanced ; a charming personality.

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**Utopia**: soon made a European reputation; supposed experiences of a sailor, Raphael Hythlodae, companion of Vespucci; picture of an ideal state, based on Plato's *Republic*; with plenty of original thought; pleasant but poignant satire on abuses of the time; advocates a kind of socialism instead of the selfish rule of despots; has many ideas much in advance of its age; high ethical tone and delicate irony; intellectual and moral elements not out of harmony; its influence immense; translated into English, 1551, by Ralph Robinson.

**History of Richard III**: written c. 1516; materials obtained from Morton; an excellent narrative; in prose dignified and racy: "the first example of good English language" (Hallam).

**Controversial tracts**: the excesses of Protestantism turned More into a fiery zealot for the Church; his controversies with Tyndale, etc., in vigorous prose, but scurrilous and unworthy of More the humanist; great mass of these pamphlets: lumber—except the *Apology of Sir Thomas More*, 1533, in which he defends his personal position with comparative moderation.

**Sir Thomas Elyot** (? 1490–1546): friend of More; clerk to the Privy Council, 1523–30; ambassador to Charles V, 1531, 1535; M.P. for Cambridge, 1542; an industrious translator; compiled a Latin Dictionary; wrote *The Governour*, 1531—dedicated to Henry VIII; describes the necessary qualities of a ruler: has interesting thoughts on education and politics: not very original, but transmitted much useful material in an agreeable way; helped forward English culture; also wrote a companion medical book, *The Castle of Health*.

**Thomas Wilson** (? 1530–81): a man of varied career; a Protestant, imprisoned by the Inquisition in Rome; a lay dean of Durham; M.P. and Court official; author of the *Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553—the first critical treatise in English; based on Quintilian; advocates a simple unvarnished prose style and accomplishes his own advice; also wrote the *Arte of Logique*, 1551, and a *Discourse on Usurye*, 1572.

**Sir John Cheke** (1514–57): famous as teacher of Greek at Cambridge; not an important writer; may be remembered by his *Hurt of Sedition*, 1549.

**Roger Ascham** (1515–68): a Yorkshireman; professor of Greek and Public Orator at Cambridge; tutor to Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth; did much to improve English prose by the study of Latin models; wrote *Toxophilus*, 1544; and *The Scholemaster*, 1563; had an important influence on education.

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**Toxophilus** : a treatise on archery ; valuable for technical details ; also for its moral applications, and its easy, racy prose.

**The Scholemaster** : devoted to the methods of teaching Latin ; still worth reading as the fruit of an experienced teacher ; also for its enthusiasm for learning ; contains his famous condemnation of Italy, and his praise of Lady Jane and Elizabeth ; in correct, businesslike prose, without grace.

(b) **Religious Writers** : Mainly Protestant ; occupied chiefly with the translation of the Bible and the Liturgy ; Tyndale completed the New Testament, 1526—based upon Erasmus' Greek text ; he began the Old Testament and printed the Pentateuch, 1530 ; Coverdale, using Latin and German versions, and Tyndale's, completed the whole Bible, 1535 ; the "Great" Bible, edited by him, appeared in England, 1539 ; the "Geneva" Bible, done by English exiles in Geneva, was completed, 1560, and was popular for many years ; the "Bishops'" Bible, a new version by English scholars, working under Archbishop Parker, was issued, 1568 ; it remained the official Bible till 1611.

**William Tyndale** (? 1484–1536) : educated at Oxford ; learnt Greek at Cambridge ; translated Erasmus' *Enchiridion* ; united the character of humanist and reformer ; left England, 1524 ; led a wandering life on the Continent, dogged by English Government spies ; was strangled and burnt for heresy at Antwerp, 1536 ; had a violent controversy with More ; advocated a rational view of Christianity ; his Bible, helped by Luther's, the foundation of later Bibles ; his writing generally clear and strong.

**Miles Coverdale** (? 1488–1569) : educated at Cambridge ; became a reformer, and went abroad, 1528 ; issued his Bible, 1535 ; prepared the Great Bible in Paris ; returned to England, 1547 ; bishop of Exeter, 1551 ; deprived, 1553 ; in exile, 1555–8 ; lived in poverty and obscurity ; obtained a living in London, 1563. Not so original or so accurate a scholar as Tyndale, but a more graceful stylist.

**Thomas Cranmer** (1489–1556) : played an important part in the literature as well as the history of the Reformation in England ; wrote many controversial pamphlets on points of doctrine ; also a preface to the Great Bible, officially adopted in England, 1539 ; was the supervising spirit, if not the actual author, of the English Prayer-Book, 1549, 1552. If he wrote the prayers, he is one of the purest and most melodious of our prose-writers.

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**Hugh Latimer** (1491–1555) : a Leicestershire man ; educated at Cambridge ; bishop of Worcester, 1535 ; a thoroughgoing reformer, he resigned his bishopric on account of the Six Articles, 1539 ; was imprisoned in the Tower, 1546–7 ; preached before Edward VI, 1549 ; martyred at Oxford, 1555. Latimer's sermons have the racy flavour of his yeoman origin and popular sympathies ; plain-speaking and homely illustration their key-note ; dramatic, personal, abrupt in manner ; have no scholarship, no display, no rhetoric except that of sincerity ; they reveal the rugged preacher himself.

**John Foxe** (1516–87) : a strong Protestant ; wrote *The Book of Martyrs*, while in exile abroad—first in Latin, 1559 ; then in English, 1563 ; one of the most popular religious books ; a history of the Reformation—not calm or impartial, but in garish colours ; yet interesting, as all well-told stories must be.

**John Knox** (1505–72) : the great Scottish reformer fills a niche here with his *Admonitions* ; his *Trumpet Blast against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, 1558 ; and his *History of the Reformation in Scotland* ; his writings are bulky, and reflect the man ; sincere and narrow, bitter and straightforward, lacking in humour and grace.

## (c) Romance and Chronicle

**John Bourchier, Lord Berners** (1467–1532) : a soldier and diplomatist of note under Henry VII and Henry VIII ; was at the capture of Tournai, 1513 ; at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, 1520 ; appointed Governor of Calais, 1520 ; at the command of the King, spent his leisure on a translation of the *Chronicles* of Froissart—printed, 1523 : one of the best translations in the language : simple, straightforward, and natural prose, written by an enthusiast, of intimate knowledge ; also translated other romances, including *Huon of Bordeaux* ; and the *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius* from a French translation of the Spanish version by Antonio Guevara—the latter in an affected, euphuistic style, quite different from the pleasing diction of the romances.

**Robert Fabian** (d. 1513) : a member of the Drapers' Company and an alderman ; a merchant and scholar ; wrote *The Concordance of Histories*, printed 1516, a rude attempt to write a well-balanced history in literary form ; interesting in its later parts.

**Edward Hall** (d. 1547) : a public man ; judge of the Sheriffs Court in London, and M.P. from 1540 ; wrote a *Chronicle* on the early

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Tudor reigns ; used by Shakespeare ; valuable for contemporary facts, especially about Wolsey and London.

**John Leland** (d. 1552) : attempted a survey of all the antiquities of Britain under a commission as the King's Antiquary ; collected vast quantities of valuable material, not printed until the eighteenth century ; wrote good Latin, but undistinguished English.

**George Cavendish** (d. c. 1561) : must be remembered for his sound and valuable *Life of Wolsey*, 1557.

**Raphael Holinshed** (d. c. 1580) wrote a *Chronicle of England and Scotland*, often used by Shakespeare ; a narrative interesting from his moral reflections and quaint aptitude at story-telling ; reliable and independent ; some of the merits due to his collaborator, William Harrison.

**George Buchanan** (1506-82) : a Scotsman who had a Continental reputation for his Latin writings, in prose and verse ; satirist, dramatist, philosopher, translator ; a Reformer and friend of Knox ; wrote little in English—two tracts only survive : *Chamæleon*, a satire on Maitland of Lethington ; and an *Admonition to the Trew Lordis* ; in sonorous Latinized prose.

## C. Poetry

### I. BALLADS

A ballad may be defined as a song that tells a story ; some are the real folk-songs of the people, and go back for their themes to very ancient times ; others tell of local legends, often with a strong supernatural flavour ; others link themselves to historical events, fresh to the memories of the original narrators. Many existed in the fourteenth century (Langland, Barbour) ; very many were printed towards the beginning of the sixteenth ; others have since been rescued from popular tradition. The fifteenth century the golden age of the ballad ; the printing press gave ballads permanent form. Their poetic value usually not high ; their metre the familiar "ballad-stanza"—rude and primitive ; not often the work of a single poet ; yet they often stir "as with a trumpet," touch deep human feelings ; are dramatic, picturesque, pathetic, chivalrous ; masterly in condensation and suggestiveness ; the English not so good as those of the Scottish border, where the professional minstrel survived longest.

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Among the historical ballads are *Sir Patrick Spens*; *Chevy Chase* (English, c. 1450); *The Battle of Otterbourne*; *Edom o' Gordon*; *Kinmont Willie* (later): examples of the supernatural ballad are *The Wife of Usher's Well*; *The Two Corbies*; of the more homely ballad, with wide-spread motive, *The Douglas Tragedy*; *Baby Lon*; of those which rise to the dignity of poetry, *The Lyke-Wake Dirge*; "O, Waly, Waly up the bank"; *The Nut-Browne Maid*—this latter a product of the fifteenth century and a great poem in any age. The Robin Hood cycle also belongs to that century or shortly after; it was deservedly popular.

## II. BEFORE THE RENAISSANCE

**John Skelton** (? 1465–1529): a Cambridge man, early famous for his scholarship; wrote a poem on the death of Edward IV, 1483; an elegy on the Earl of Northumberland, in which he describes himself as Poet Laureate, 1489; referred to with respect by Caxton in his *Eneydos*, 1490; was tutor to Prince Henry, for whom he wrote *Speculum Principis* (lost); became rector of Diss (Norfolk), but was suspended for marriage; came to London and was at first in the train of Wolsey; afterwards satirized him ruthlessly; had to take sanctuary at Westminster, where he died, 1529. Imitated the Chaucerian allegory in *The Bowge of Court* and *The Goodly Garden of Laurel*; took a less conventional line in the *Boke of Philippe Sparrowe*—a dirge on the death of a sparrow, suggested by Catullus, written in rapid riming trimeters; was perfectly at home in the biting satire of *Colin Clout*—against the clergy; and *Why come ye not to Court?*—against Wolsey, 1519; also has a niche in the history of the drama with *The Negramansir*, 1504, "a moral enterlude and a pithie"; and *Magnificence*, one of the best surviving morality plays; was a scornful satirist—the Swift of his day; with no reverence for tradition; clever and destructive; with a remarkable facility in rimes; most successful in the short-lined couplets of three feet; apt in coarse or ribald ballads; irresponsible, audacious, ready at burlesque; but always awake.

**Stephen Hawes** (d. c. 1523): the poet of the reign of Henry VII; enjoyed the King's favour, but little definite known of him; his chief poem *The Pastime of Pleasure* (printed by Wynkyn de

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Worde, 1509)—the “history of Grand Amour and La Belle Pucelle”; an elaborate allegory, with moral purpose, in rime royal and heroic couplets; looks back to Chaucer and Lydgate, but faintly foreshadows the chivalry of Spenser; is uneven and uncertain in rhythm, but has pensive passages of pleasing description; no leaven of humanism; also wrote the *Example of Virtue*; the *Conversion of Sweurus*; and a *Joyfull Meditation of All England on the Coronation of Henry VIII*.

**Alexander Barclay** (? 1474–1552): an industrious translator and adapter, was a monk of Ely and became a Franciscan at Canterbury; may be remembered for his version of Sebastian Brandt’s *Narrenschiff* (Ship of Fools), 1508, in Chaucerian stanzas, a satirical poem which enjoyed a wide popularity; and for his five *Eclogues*, 1514, poems with some of the graceful sentiment of their Italian originals; in spite of his indebtedness, Barclay expresses his own personality.

### III. BEGINNINGS OF THE RENAISSANCE

The new poetry arose at Court, 1529–33; its new features a regard for form and a broader culture; abandoned the Chaucerian allegory; allowed the stream of European culture to flow into England; cultivated the lyric especially, on Italian models.

**Sir Thomas Wyatt** (1503–42): pioneer of the new poetry; born in Kent, of good family; M.A., Cambridge, 1520; gentleman of the bedchamber to the King, 1520; visited Italy, 1527; was at the marriage of Anne Boleyn, 1533; knighted, 1537; in Spain, on an embassy to Charles V, 1537–9; on the fall of Cromwell, imprisoned in the Tower, 1540; received again into favour; died of fever, while going to meet the Spanish ambassador, 1542. Wrote love-poems and satires: the love-poems in many metres, imitated from Italian lyrists; his were our first sonnets, on the Petrarchan model; used ottava rima, terza rima, alexandrines, septenars—with careful attention to scansion, but without mastery of rhythm: his satires genial and urbane, cultured and broad-minded: not a mere Court poet; but often has a moral dignity, gravity and piety, almost sombre in their seriousness.

**Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey** (1518–47): grandson of the victor of Flodden; a man of culture and martial spirit; fought against the Scots, 1542, and in France, 1543–5; involved in his father’s intrigues against the Seymours, was executed for high treason, 1547. As a poet followed Italian models; gleaned where Wyatt reaped; in his sonnets to “Geraldine,” modified the strict Petrarchan form into the later Elizabethan type; used blank verse in his translation of the *Aeneid*, II, IV; more melodious than Wyatt, and more naturally a poet; but less

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weighty and less cultured ; between them our poetry was emancipated from the crudeness and prolixity of mediæval verse ; Surrey worth study for his graceful style, his spontaneous sweet ness, his love of nature ; his lyrics first published in *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557.

**Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst** (1536–1608) : did much for literature in his early days, but was entirely concerned with politics in his later life ; became Lord High Treasurer, 1599 ; and Earl of Dorset, 1604. In conjunction with Thomas Norton, wrote; *Gorboduc*, 1561—the first English tragedy (p. 66) ; contributed the Induction and one section to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, 1563 : a miscellany, continuing Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* to the reign of Richard III—an uninspired production edited by one William Baldwin, first in 1559 ; the Induction contains much true poetry, inspired by Dante and Virgil, with clear anticipations of Spenser in its allegorical manner.

**Translators.** The new interest in Latin and Greek made a demand for translations from the classics : Arthur Golding (? 1536–? 1605) in his Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1567, produced one of the best and most influential of these ; Thomas Phaer (d. 1560) began his competent translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* in 1555 : he was an Oxford man, and a physician ; a contributor to the *Mirror for Magistrates*. Richard Stanyhurst (1547–1618) followed him with a translation in English hexameters. In 1559, Jasper Heywood (1535–98) began the translation of Seneca's plays with *Troas* and *Thyestes*.

## D. Beginnings of the Drama

The Church the cradle of mediæval drama ; earliest drama simple expositions of the liturgy ; performed in the church, in the porch, or in the churchyard ; the actors at first clergy only ; later the friars and the laity took part ; by 1300 the representations had almost entirely passed into lay hands ; transferred to the streets, market-places, village commons—then to houses of nobles, the Court, public theatres ; this development the result of the importance of fairs, the growth of wealth and trade, the prosperity of the guilds ; became especially associated with the festival of Corpus Christi, c. 1300.

(a) **Miracle plays** : On the lives of Saints ; performed in church ; mostly in Latin ; the earliest recorded in England, the *Play of St. Katharine* (lost), probably by Geoffrey of Gorham, abbot of St. Albans, performed at Dunstable, c. 1119 (Matthew Paris) ; Hilarius—an Anglo-Norman cleric—wrote the play of *St. Nicholas*, c. 1150–60 ; the oldest extant English fragment is on the *Harrowing of Hell*, in East Midland dialect, c. 1300.

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

(b) **Mystery plays**: Developed from the Christmas and Easter plays; these united in a larger performance for Corpus Christi day (Thursday after Trinity Sunday), after 1311; taken up by the guilds; performed in cycles, representing the complete gospel history; each trade responsible for one incident, e.g. at Norwich the grocers got up the Creation play; the stage, or pageant, a wooden platform with three floors—heaven, earth, hell; became more dramatic as they developed; clumsy combinations of idealism and realism; comic characters introduced, e.g. Noah's wife, Herod; much horseplay and practical joking at the Devil's expense; dialogue often lively, but versification always rude; exceptional growth at Norwich, York, and in the North generally; performed at Chester as late as 1577, at Coventry, 1580; authorship unknown.

(i) The **Chester cycle**: 24 plays, 1350–1500; some perhaps the work of Ralph Higden (p. 38); rather more didactic and less dramatic than the others.

(ii) The **Towneley mysteries**: 30 plays, 1350–1450; acted at Wakefield fair; central play the conspiracy and seizure of Jesus; others grafted on it; e.g. Isaac, Esau and Jacob; mixture of coarse and refined, tender and crude; comic and serious; humour of Cain, Noah's wife and the Shepherds' play of the Nativity; most dramatic group.

(iii) **York cycle**: 48 plays, 1350–1450; harmonized with the Towneley group; more variety of metre and style; better attempts at characterization, e.g. Joseph and Mary; Richard II present at the festival, 1397.

(iv) **Coventry mysteries**: 42 plays, 1400–1500; patronized by Henry V, 1416; Queen Margaret, 1456; possibly seen by Shakespeare, 1580; in accord with traditional methods; less humour and freshness; include the play of the Shearmen and Tailors, a complete Christmas mystery of earlier date (? 1334).

(c) **Subjects other than religious** used in the later fifteenth century; e.g. fragments of a Robin Hood cycle survive.

(d) **Morality plays**: Allegorical; abstractions figure as *dramatis personæ*; tendency of mystery plays to develop in that direction—e.g. in the four Digby mysteries; on the whole serious and heavy; improvement in style; work out their idea by a continuous plot; hence, a great advance towards unity of construction; more attention paid to suitable scenery; the oldest (not extant), the *Play of the Paternoster*, played at York in the reign of Edward III; the oldest extant, the *Castle of Perseverance*, c. 1460–80—long, purely allegorical, dignified in tone; in the same MS with it are *Mind, Will and Understanding* and *Mankind*; of wider, less theological interest are *Everyman*, c. 1500, and *Mundus et Infans*, printed 1522; more restricted in range, and more human in interest, are the shorter *Hickescorner*

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and *Lusty Juventus*; general problems of knowledge are dealt with in *The Nature of the Four Elements*, c. 1517, and *Wit and Science*, by John Redford; later, the tendency to individualize the abstractions grew, as in Skelton's *Magnifice* and Lyndesay's *Satire of the Three Estates*, c. 1531; comic action kept in the background, but burst out in the interlude.

(e) **Interludes**: Henry VIII specially fond of the spectacular drama; hence, the development of mumming, morris-dances, pageants, etc., into the masque; also the opposite development of the interlude; at first short moralities; later a new type of drama—without moral purpose, with witty dialogue, farcical incidents.

**John Heywood** (? 1497?–? 1580): origin unknown; a Catholic and friend of More; in favour with Henry VIII as actor and singer; employed at Court till Mary's death; exiled himself to Mechlin on Elizabeth's accession; invented the interlude and paved the way for true comedy; his characters human not abstract types; his plays purely English, unmodified by foreign influence; lively in dialogue; Chaucerian in spirit: e.g. *The Foure PP*—a merry interlude of palmer, pardoner, potecary, pedlar—a competition in lying—witty, genial satire, but no action; *The Merrie Play between Pardoner and Friar, the Curate and Neighbour Pratt*; *The Merrie Play between Johann the Husband, Tib his Wife, and Sir John the Priest*; *Dialogue of Wit and Folly*; *The Play of the Wether*; etc.

*Thersites*, c. 1537, by an unknown author, approaches nearer to comedy; apparently has suggestions from the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus.

(f) **The Chronicle-History**: An adaptation of history to the purposes of the morality; first seen in *Robert Cicill*, 1529; and Bale's *Kyng Johan*, c. 1550.

**John Bale** (1495?–1565): a strong Protestant; forced to leave England, 1540; author of many miracles, mysteries, interludes, tragedies (most lost); *Kyng Johan* strongly Protestant, in the spirit of the reign of Edward VI; the King the hero because of his anti-papal views; combines the methods of the morality and the interlude; the "Vice" = Sedition = Langton; an uneasy mixture; written in loose, long-lined stanzas; heavy and cumbrous verse.

The style became popular; other notable examples, known to Shakespeare: *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, before 1588; the *Troublesome Raigne of King John*, 1591; *King Leir and his Three Daughters*, 1593.

(g) **Classical Comedy**: True comedy came when a clear story was added to Heywood's delineation of character; this done by scholars who knew Plautus and Terence.

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**Nicholas Udall** (1506–56): master of Eton and later of Westminster; a Protestant, who wrote on religious and humanistic themes; remembered by *Ralph Roister Doister*, c. 1552: the first true comedy in English; with a good plot, plenty of boisterous fun, lively dialogue, amusing situation, comic characters; inspired by Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, and of similar theme.

**John Still** (?1543–1608): bishop of Bath and Wells; long reputed to be the author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, c. 1566: a lively comedy of the West Country; coarser and less clever than *Ralph Roister Doister*; with less Latin influence; a popular development of the comic element in the mysteries and moralities; author more likely to be one William Stevenson, but still doubtful.

**George Gascoigne** (?–1577): translated Ariosto's *Supposes* and collaborated on *Jocasta*, 1566; thus introduced Italian prose comedy and paved the way for Lylly.

(h) **Tragedy**: Not of native origin; developed from study of classical models, especially Seneca; *Gorboduc*, 1561, by Thomas Sackville (p. 63), the first English tragedy; on the Senecan model; observed the three unities; no action on the stage; dignified but frigid blank verse; highly praised by Sidney; not in harmony with the English genius; popular opinion liked action, and did not mind the mixture of comedy and tragedy; writers uncertain of their method till Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, 1587; this signalized the triumph of the romantic over the classical method.

Other plays on the classical plan—with good scenes, but showing no skill in style or in construction—are Thomas Preston's *Cambises*, 1561; Richard Edwards' *Damon and Pythias*, 1571; George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578. An anonymous play, *Tancred and Gismunda*, 1568, is classical in the first four acts, but ends in a death on the stage.

## CHAPTER V

### ELIZABETHAN POETRY AND PROSE, 1579-1625

#### A. Characteristics

THE national consciousness exalted by the success of Elizabeth ; an age of adventure and discovery, reflected in its literary achievements ; the fruits of the Renaissance reaped in the work of Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare ; the adoption of Protestantism accompanied by freedom of thought and seriousness of life ; defeat of the Armada followed by a wave of patriotism.

Despite his debt to French and Italian writers, Spenser fundamentally English, the heir of Chaucer ; a purely English drama established by Marlowe and Shakespeare ; Puritanism foreshadowed in Spenser and Sidney ; a scientific philosophy begun in Bacon ; study of poetry upheld mainly in Court circles, but spreading to other classes through the improvement of the schools ; the Elizabethan impulse prolonged into James I's reign, then died away through changes in national tone and policy.

(a) **Foreign Literature** very active ; in France **Montaigne** (1533-92) wrote his *Essais* (1580-8) ; in Italy, after the death of **Ariosto** (1474-1533) came **Tasso** (1544-95) with his great epic, *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) ; in Spain, arose **Cervantes** (1547-1616) whose *Don Quixote* appeared, 1605, and **Lope de Vega** (1562-1635) its greatest dramatist. Mention should also be made of the great critic and scholar, **J. C. Scaliger** (1484-1588) whose influence was strong with the coming classical school ; of the philosopher, **Giordano Bruno** (burnt, 1600) and the astronomers, **Tycho Brahe** (1546-1601), **Kepler** (1571-1630), and **Galileo** (1564-1642).

(b) **Minor Poetry**, 1560-1600 : Much minor verse written ; popular forms—the lyric, the pastoral, the sonnet ; chief influences before Spenser—Petrarch, Ovid and other classics, the *Pléiade*.

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**Chief names :** Lord Vaux, Nicholas Grimald, (contributor to Tottel's *Miscellany*) ; Barnabe Googe, author of *Eclogues* (1563), which anticipated Spenser's pastorals ; George Turberville translator and lyrist ; Thomas Churchyard, author of *Chips* (1575), *Choice* (1579), *Charity* (1595) and other collections with alliterative titles : described by Spenser as " Old Palemon that sung so long, until quite hoarse he grew."

**George Gascoigne** (d. 1577) : a pioneer in several directions ; translated Ariosto's *Suppositi* (the first English prose comedy) ; wrote an essay on English metres ; translated Italian novels ; wrote successful lyrics in " A Hundred Sundry Flowers bound up in one small Posy," 1572 ; applied blank verse to formal satire in *The Steel Glas*, 1576, in which he continued the tradition of *Piers Plowman*. Not a great poet, but aimed at simplicity and correctness of style ; spoke of himself aptly as " Chaucer's boy and Petrarch's journeyman."

**Miscellanies** were published at various intervals and contain much of the best lyric work of the time ; much of the work experimental, but the models were good and the result often excellent ; some of the greatest poets contributed. The chief are :—Tottel's, which went through eight editions before 1587 ; *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1576 ; *The Gorgeouſe Gaſſeſy of Gallant Invenſions*, 1578 ; *A Handfull of Pleasant Delites*, 1584 ; *The Bower of Delites* (ascribed by an unscrupulous publisher to Breton) 1592 ; *The Paſſionate Pilgrim* (ascribed, in the same way as the last mentioned, to Shakespeare) 1599 ; *England's Helicon*, 1600 (the best) ; *A Poeticaſ Rhapsody*, 1602. Work by Shakespeare, Sidney, Raleigh, Marlowe, etc., found in them. Nicholas Breton (d. 1626) one of the most active compilers and contributors.

**The Sonnet** was the chief poetic vogue from 1590 to 1600 ; imitated from Petrarch, the *Pléiade* and Desportes ; writers did not keep to the rigid rhyme arrangement (*cf.* Shakespeare's with Milton's) ; most of them conventional, but a few among the most beautiful we have ; generally published in collections or series not necessarily connected ; besides the collections of Spenser, Sidney and Shakespeare (q.v.) we may mention Constable's *Diana*, 1584 ; Daniel's *Delia*, 1592 ; Lodge's *Phillis*, 1593 ; Drayton's *Idea*, 1594 ; Sir John Davies' *Sonnets to Philomel*, 1602. Generally love-poems, but not always so—e.g. Daniel's *Sleep*.

**Thomas Watson** (d. 1592) : friend of Sidney, lets us into the secret of sonnet composition in his *Hecatompethia, or Passionate Century of Sonnets*, 1582, the first of the sequences, in which he parades his indebtedness to many authors ; published also *Teares of Fancie*, 1593, containing if anything more borrowings and less true poetry ; seems to have been an influential writer, but hardly deserved to have been.

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## B. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86)

(a) **Life**: Son of Sir Henry Sidney (President of the Council of Wales and thrice Lord Deputy of Ireland); born at Penshurst, 1554; educated at Shrewsbury; went to Christ Church, Oxford, 1568; left without a degree, 1571; went to Paris, but left after the St. Bartholomew Massacre, 1572; went to Frankfort (where he met his friend and correspondent, Langlet), to Vienna, Venice, Padua, thence to Germany and back to London, 1572-5; was present at the Kenilworth festivities, 1575; visited Ireland with the Earl of Essex and his daughter, Lady Penelope Devereux (*Stella*), 1576; was sent on diplomatic missions to Heidelberg, Vienna, Antwerp, 1577; remained at Court, though anxious to go to the Netherlands, 1578; opposed the projected marriage of Elizabeth with the Duc d'Anjou, 1579; lived at Wilton with the Countess of Pembroke, his sister 1580; returned to Court, and became M.P., 1581; was knighted 1583; married Walsingham's daughter, 1583; joined Leicester in the Netherlands, 1585; fell at Zutphen, attempting to intercept a Spanish convoy, 1586 (Sept. 22), and died (Oct. 17).

(b) **Relations with Contemporaries**: A favourite at Court, he had the mortification of feeling his talents idle and useless; a relative of Leicester; friend of Raleigh, Walsingham and all the great men of his time; friend also of Spenser, Harvey, and other literary men; an important influence and stimulus to other writers: but not a great writer himself; a Protestant whose reputation spread through Europe; a man of exceptionally lofty personal character.

(c) **Works**: *Arcadia*, written 1580, printed 1590; *Apologie for Poetrie*, written c. 1581, printed 1595; *Astrophel and Stella*, written c. 1581-6, printed 1591.

**Arcadia**: A long pastoral romance, in fanciful "Arcadian" prose, with interspersed verses; mainly amorous; much agreeable sentiment; but desultory and prolix, and in the end tedious; most important of many imitations of Italian pastoral

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novels ; written specially for the pleasure of the Countess of Pembroke.

**Apologie for Poetrie** : reply to Gosson's *School of Abuse* (p. 80) ; a tract in honour of poetry and drama ; his best contribution to literature ; full of learning and enthusiasm ; a pleasing picture of the man and the scholar ; still to be read with profit, in spite of errors of judgment.

**Astrophel and Stella** : a sequence of 108 sonnets ; recounts the love-story of the poet (Astrophel) and Lady Penelope Devereux (Stella) ; he did not realize his love till Stella was married (to Lord Rich) ; then love became a devouring passion, and the sonnets tell us of his disease and his cure ; some are really beautiful poems ; others but frigid imitations of French or Italian prototypes.

Imitations of classical metres in *Arcadia* and elsewhere were failures.

## (d) Appreciations.

He was (woe worth that word !) to each well-thinking mind  
A spotless friend, a matchless man, whose virtue ever shined,  
Declaring in his thoughts, his life and that he writ,  
Highest conceits, longest foresights, and deepest works of  
wit.—FULKE GREVILLE, LORD BROOKE.

Gentle Sir Philip Sidney ! thou knewest what belonged to a scholar.—NASH.

When we come to enquire into the why and the wherefore of this astonishing effect upon contemporaries, what do we find ? . . . . we have a tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance which the patience of a young virgin in love cannot now wade through ; and some absurd attempts to fetter English verse in Roman chains.—HORACE WALPOLE.

The ideal of his generation, and for us the sweetest interpreter of its aspirations.—J. A. SYMONDS.

## C. Edmund Spenser (1552-99)

**(a) Life** : Born of a good Lancashire family in London, 1552 ; educated at the new Merchant Taylors' School under Dr. Mulcaster ; went up to Pembroke College, Cambridge, as a sizar, 1569 ; had probably already translated certain sonnets of Petrarch and Du Bellay ; possibly came under the influence of Dr. Cartwright, professor of divinity and a strong Puritan ; took his degree in 1573, and became M.A. in 1576, but made no mark in scholarship ; resided for a time in the North and fell in love with the unknown Rosalind of his poetry ; returned to London, 1578 ;

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published *The Shepheardes Calendar*, 1579 ; patronized by the Earl of Leicester ; became private secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland, 1580 ; appointed to a clerkship in the Irish Court of Chancery, 1581—at the same time receiving an estate in Wexford ; promoted to the Clerkship of the Council of Munster, and went to reside at Kilcolman, c. 1588 ; visited England, and published three books of the *Faerie Queene*, 1589–90 ; returned to Kilcolman, 1591 ; married the Elizabeth of his sonnets, 1594 ; revisited London, 1595, where he stayed till 1597 ; became Sheriff of Cork, 1598 ; his home at Kilcolman destroyed by Irish rebels, 1598 ; fled to London, and died in Westminster, perhaps in poverty, January 16, 1599.

(b) **Public Work :** He appears to have been anxious to become a courtier and to enjoy some lucrative sinecure in England ; but, possibly by the opposition of Burghley, he was exiled to the uncongenial and thankless Irish post. In that position he did his duty, but brought no new or enlightened ideas to it ; he was the ordinary English official, and incurred a larger share than most of the hatred of the Irish. Legal records remain to show that his methods of adding to his estate were unscrupulous enough to account for this. The end was a dismal collapse.

(c) **Relations with Contemporaries :** The Queen seems to have appreciated his poetical gifts, and to have enjoyed the flattering honours he paid to her through Gloriana and Britomart ; but while she could obtain his worship without them she offered him few of his desired rewards except a small pension. Burghley was hostile, and Leicester but a lukewarm friend. Raleigh was an intimate of the poet's in Ireland, and to him the *Faerie Queene* was dedicated. During his early residence in London, Spenser saw much of Sir Philip Sidney, and found him a congenial spirit : both were members of the Areopagus, a literary club founded for the study of poetry. The leading spirit of this club was Gabriel Harvey, a scholar and pedant, under whose

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influence Spenser composed verses in the Latin metres, and who caused Spenser to lay aside the *Faerie Queene* for some years.

(d) **Literary Work**: *Shepheardes Calendar*, 1579; *Astrophel* (written on the death of Sidney), 1586; *Faerie Queene* I-III, 1589; *Complaints*, 1591 (containing *The Ruines of Time*, *The Teares of The Muses*, *Virgil's Gnat*, *Mother Hubberds Tale*, *Muiopotmos*, and translations from Petrarch and Du Bellay); *Daphnaida*, 1591 (?); *Amoretti* and *Epithalamium*, 1595; *Colin Clouts Come Home Again*, 1595 (written in Ireland, 1591); *Faerie Queene*, IV-VI, 1595; *Hymns*, 1596 (containing *Hymns In Honour of Love*, *In Honour of Beautie*, *Of Heavenlie Love*, *Of Heavenlie Beautie*); *Prothalamium*, 1596; *View of the Present State of Ireland* (prose), 1633 (written *ante* 1596).

**The Faerie Queene**: an elaborate allegory, designed to represent the twelve moral virtues, each in its individual and its public aspect; with Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, for their centre; six of the 24 books thus planned were completed.

I. *Holiness*: the story of Una and the Red Cross Knight, in which Truth and Holiness unite to slay the dragon of Error and liberate his captives; a beautiful allegory rich with equally beautiful illustrations and excursions: e.g. the description of Una, that of the Knight's visit to the three sisters, and the fight with the dragon itself.

II. *Temperance*: the story of Sir Guyon and his many fights with the monsters of incontinence, his temptations and strife; richer in elaborate detail, perhaps, than I, and contains the characteristic pictures of the Cave of Mammon and the Bower of Bliss.

III. *Chastity*: the legend of Britomart; again a series of stories rather than one connected allegory; Chastity represented by Britomart, Belphebe and (partly) Florimel; descriptions still more elaborate, e.g. the gardens of Adonis (canto VI) and the masque of Cupid (canto XII).

IV. *Friendship*: the legend of Cambel and Triamond. The poet's roaming tendency leads to confusion, and makes the book difficult to read as a whole; but, though prolix, the temple of Venus is a fine picture (but cf. Chaucer's *Knightes Tale*) and the wedding of the Thames and Medway a delightful fantasy.

V. *Justice*: the story of Sir Artegal. The hero stands here undoubtedly for Lord Grey of Wilton, and his exploits in Ireland are the basis of the adventures of the book. Sir Artegal

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is the type of the public man of the period, and in his connexion with Britomart may be traced many incidents of Elizabeth's reign.

VI. *Courtesy*: the legend of Sir Calidore. Sir Philip Sidney probably sat for the portrait of Sir Calidore, and the most interesting part of a diffuse book is the last three cantos telling of Calidore's courtship of the fair Pastorell and of his temporary subduing of the Blatant Beast.

VII. *Constancy*: only a fine fragment—two cantos on Mutability—has been preserved of this book.

**The Shepheardes Calendar**: a series of twelve eclogues which were accompanied by explanatory notes supplied by the poet's friend, E. K., i.e. Edmund Kirke; they were published anonymously under the pseudonym Immerito. The persons of the eclogues are some of the poet's contemporaries disguised as Hobbinol (Harvey), Algrind (Grindal), Elisa (the Queen), and Colin Clout (Spenser himself). The shepherds and swains are humbler contemporary types. Chaucer, whose language is imitated, is Tityrus.

The subjects of the twelve eclogues are:—January—the unrequited love of Colin for Rosalind; February—the fable of the Oak and the Brier; March—the signs of Cupid's presence; April—in praise of fair Elisa; May—a dialogue concerning true religion; June—another lament for Rosalind; July—"in honour of good shepheardes"; August—a direct imitation of a dialogue in Theocritus; September—an attack upon Popish abuses; October—the perfect pattern of a poet; November—an elegy on a maiden of high degree (in imitation of Marot); December—the old subject of his wasting love.

**Epithalamium**: a magnificent wedding ode celebrating the poet's own marriage. It consists of 23 stanzas each of which is a perfect harmony of beautiful melody and colour and rapturous love.

**Prothalamium** celebrates the marriage of the two daughters of the Earl of Worcester. It was written partly in honour of their kinsman the Earl of Essex, whom it introduces, and from whose house they were married. It is lighter and gayer than its companion poem, but no less beautiful and melodious. The Thames has never been more honoured in poetry.

**Complaints** contains *Mother Hubberds Tale*, a satirical analogue of the fox and the ape, in the manner of Chaucer; and *The Teares of the Muses*, a rather inconsequent lament over the condition of learning and poetry at a time when Marlowe and Spenser himself had just produced their most influential work.

**Colin Clouts come Home again** is interesting as autobiography: it recounts in pastoral form the poet's impressions on his return

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to England in 1591. These are many of them lugubrious, and no echo of the glory of 1588 brightens them.

**Amoretti** is a sonnet-sequence recounting the poet's ups and downs in the love-episode which ended in his marriage.

**View of the Present State of Ireland**: a prose dialogue concerning the government of Ireland, between Eudoxus, the champion of the English, and Irenæus, the enthusiast for Ireland; interesting for the light it throws upon our method of treating the Irish problem in 1596 and upon Spenser's own ideas.

(e) **Literary Position**: The first great English poet of the Renaissance; united in himself an equal enthusiasm for Chaucer and for the classics; in spirit represents the best ideals of Elizabethan England; in form owed much to French and Italian models, but the stanza of the *Faerie Queene* his own invention; a master of colour and melody, rather than of form; his richness of imagery justifies the title "poet's poet"; from Milton to Tennyson, other poets have been indebted to him for suggestion and inspiration.

(f) **Appreciations**: The *Shepheard's Kalender* hath much Poetrie in his Eglogues: indeede worthy the reading if I be not deceived. That same framing of his stile to an old rustick language, I dare not alowe.—**SIR PHILIP SIDNEY** (c. 1580).

Spenser had studied Virgil to as much advantage as Milton had done Homer.—**DRYDEN**.

Spenser's *Epithalamium* is truly sublime; and pray mark the swan-like movement of his exquisite *Prothalamium*. His attention to metre and rhythm is sometimes so extremely minute as to be painful even to my ear, and you know how highly I prize good versification.—**COLERIDGE**.

One unpardonable fault, the fault of tediousness, pervades the whole of the *Faerie Queene*. We become sick of cardinal virtues and deadly sins, and long for the society of plain men and women. Of the persons who read the first canto, not one in ten reaches the end of the first book, and not one in a hundred perseveres to the end of the poem.—**MACAULAY**.

He has permanently lifted the level of English poetry by a great and sustained effort of rich and varied art, in which one main purpose rules, loyalty to what is noble and pure, and in which this main purpose subordinates to itself every feature and every detail, and harmonizes some that by themselves seem least in keeping with it.—**R. W. CHURCH**.

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## D. Later Elizabethan Poetry

### I. THE METRICAL HISTORIANS

**Samuel Daniel** (1562–1619): an ambitious but not great poet; wrote *Delia*, 1592; *The Complaint of Rosamond*, 1592; *The Civil Wars*, 1595–1609; *Musophilus*, 1599; a Panegyric on James I, 1603; *A Defence of Rime*, 1602; *The Queene's Arcadia*, 1606; *Hymen's Triumph*, 1615. Became a licenser and producer of plays; was successful in literature, and retired during his last years to a farmhouse in Somerset. His work generally heavy and uninspiring, especially his epic on the Wars of the Roses; some of his occasional poems good, e.g. his sonnets, *Ulysses and the Siren*, and the epistles addressed to eminent men in 1601–3; his prose in *Musophilus*, a defence of learning, excellent; on the whole a grave and earnest moralist, writing an easy verse, rather than a poet.

**Michael Drayton** (1563–1631): a voluminous versifier who plodded on steadily throughout his life, producing much work of a humdrum kind; wrote a *Harmony of the Church*, 1591, a religious poem; *Idea*, 1593; *Pastorals*, 1593; *The Barons' Wars*, 1596–1603, a long epic of the wars of Edward II, first called *Mortimeriados*; *England's Heroical Epistles*, 1597, historical love-letters in verse; *The Owl*, 1604, a poor satire; historical legends—of Piers Gaveston, Robert of Normandy, Thomas Cromwell, etc., 1594–1607; *Polyolbion*, 1613–22, a kind of poetical gazetteer of England in riming alexandrines; *The Battle of Agincourt*, 1627; *The Shepherd's Sirena*, 1627; *The Muses' Elysium*, 1630. Of this large mass of work very little is of the first quality; the *Polyolbion* is not absolutely dull, and is often redeemed by its patriotic enthusiasm and its keen interest in England; his historical epic is a failure—the attempt to write an epic worthy of the country had its only success in Shakespeare's series of historical plays; the *Heroical Epistles* are occasionally graceful, but lack dramatic truth; *Nymphidia* is an admirable fairy-poem, and *Agincourt* one of the best historical ballads in the language: for these poems and one or two of his sonnets Drayton will be remembered.

**William Warner** (1558–1609): wrote *Albion's England*, 1586–9, a popular chronicle-history in fourteen-syllable couplets; patriotic, but heavy.

### II. THE SUCCESSORS OF SPENSER

**Giles Fletcher** (1585–1623): author of *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, wrote in a modified Spenserian stanza; also adopted Spenser's allegorical method, and followed him in many little turns of style; in spite of some incongruous ornament his poem is a sincere and reverent outburst of religious rapture.

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**Phineas Fletcher** (1582–1650), elder brother of Giles, wrote *The Purple Island*, in which he imitated Spenser's allegorical and discursive style, but could not capture his better qualities ; the poem is confused and even ridiculous in parts, rarely rises into elevation of style and fails to capture the imagination. In their use of religious themes the two brothers link Spenser with Milton.

**William Browne** (1591–1643) of Tavistock was a truer poet and imitated the pastoral aspect of Spenser ; wrote *Britannia's Pastorals*, 1613, 1616 ; and the *Shepherd's Pipe*, 1614 ; also some lyrics which are generally too long, but occasionally beautiful. He was a real pastoral poet, fond of the country and able to represent his feeling sensitively ; an artist, attentive to his form, and grave and serious in his manner.

**George Wither** (1588–1667) : carries the Elizabethan impulse into the next period ; wrote many lyrics, contained in his volume of *Juvenilia*, 1622, a miscellaneous collection ; including the Elegy on Prince Henry (1612), *Epithalamia* (1613), *Abuses Stript and Whipt* (1613) and *Fidelia* (1615) ; the *Mistress of Philarete*, 1622 : *Hymns and Songs of the Church*, 1623 ; *Emblems*, 1634 ; *Hallelujah*, 1641 ; and very much more. His best work in the *Juvenilia*, where he shows his skill in lyrics of various metres, in satire and in pastoral ; he entered into the controversies of the Civil War, and his later poems are on religious themes : they have not, except some of the hymns in *Hallelujah*, the grace and felicity of his early work ; he must be remembered as a lyrist of real sweetness, and of gentle and sincere character.

**William Drummond of Hawthornden** (1585–1649) : was an independent Scotch landlord, who lived a retired life and indulged a cultured taste for literature ; his best work is in the *Poems*, 1616, "amorous, funeral, divine, pastoral, in sonnets, songs, sextains, madrigals" ; and *Flowers of Sion*, 1623 ; had a dignified vein of pensive melancholy, a sombre sense of religion, a deep interest in his art ; his conversations with Ben Jonson were discovered and printed, 1832, and are of real value.

### III. MISCELLANEOUS POETS

The number of minor poets of this period is very large. **Henry Constable** (1562–1612) had a pleasant fancy and some of his sonnets in *Diana* are ingenious ; **Richard Barnfield** (1574–1627) is remembered by one beautiful lyric, "As it fell upon a day," long attributed to Shakespeare ; **Robert Southwell** (1561–95), the martyred Jesuit, wrote *St. Peter's Complaint* and other verses distinguished by their serious religious tone ; **Sir Edward Dyer** (1550–1607) was a friend of Sidney's, and also a man of one poem, "My mind to me a kingdom is" ; **Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke** (1554–1628), also a friend of Sidney's and his biographer, was distinguished for some stately but rather frigid verse ; **Sir Walter Raleigh** (1552–1618) wrote a little poetry, and some

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of his lyrics are so good that we may regret his absorption in political affairs ; and finally, many men distinguished in other fields—Greene, Lodge, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson—wrote exquisite songs and some of them good poetry in other styles.

**Thomas Campion** (d. 1619) : was a lyrist of exceptional merit, who combined the musical and the poetical gifts with the profession of a doctor ; published a pamphlet against the use of rime, but fortunately was heedless of his own teaching.

**George Chapman** (1559–1634) : born at Hitchin, was a prolific writer, but—in parts—involved, obscure and difficult ; a poet, even in his plays, who did not reach his best ; wrote *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*, 1595 ; completed *Hero and Leander*, 1598 ; translated the *Iliad*, 1598–1611, in riming fourteeners, and the *Odyssey*, 1614–15, in heroic couplets ; and wrote other poems and many plays (see p. 102). The Homer is his title to fame : in spite of errors and unfaithfulness, there is a spirit and verve in it which leave the *Iliad* at least still the best verse rendering in English and almost worthy of Keats' sonnet. He was a poet to be admired for himself, as much as for his work

**Joseph Hall** (1574–1656) : bishop of Norwich, was the author of much prose, theological and political, but is remembered by *Virgidemiarum*, six books of satires, three of them “toothlesse,” 1596, the others “bityng,” 1597 ; he is the first and the best of the Elizabethan satirists ; took Horace and Juvenal for his models ; wrote in the heroic couplet ; and had the necessary moral force and restraint to make his satire tell. Less forcible because more coarse and scurrilous is *The Scourge of Villany* of **John Marston** (1575–1634).

**Sir John Davies** (1567–1626) : a successful man of affairs, tried his hand at poetry, but only succeeded in being extravagant or dull. *Nosce Teipsum*, 1599, is a Lucretian poem on the immortality of the Soul, as prosaic as its theme.

**John Donne** (1573–1631) : was the son of wealthy parents (Roman Catholics) ; spent his early life and his fortune in travel and pleasure ; was with Essex at Cadiz, 1596 ; wrote most of his love-poems, *ante* 1600 ; became interested in philosophic matters ; was ordained ; became dean of St. Paul's, 1621 ; was one of the most eloquent and popular preachers of his day. His collected poems were published posthumously, 1633. A charming *Life* of him was written by Izaak Walton.

Donne was the first of the metaphysical poets. Wit was the ruling passion of his intellect. No cleverer verses than his exist. He surprises and dazzles us by the unexpectedness of his mental feats. The best of his poems are a fantastic jugglery of words, yet moved by genuine and lofty passion and by a deep religious

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feeling. He analyzes and examines his emotions, turning them round and round so as to see them in every possible aspect. "The Will" and "Go and catch a falling star" are favourable examples of his lyric power. His satires, written earlier than Hall's, are equally good.

## E. Elizabethan Prose

The level of prose not so high as that of the poetry ; the great writers, like Bacon, developed their own style, which is peculiar to them ; there was no standard for the average writer to use : the men of genius could write prose, but others had only an ill-formed and clumsy weapon at their command.

### I. NOVELISTS

Translations from the Italian—Boccaccio, Bandello, Cinthio, etc.—led the way, and pointed the way to English journalists, anxious to make a living by their pens.

**John Lyly** (? 1553–1606) : was a native of Kent ; became M.A. of Oxford, 1575 ; settled in London, 1577 ; obtained some work at Court, 1578 ; acted as assistant to the master of the revels, and himself wrote several comedies (p. 87) ; wrote *Euphues : the Anatomie of Wit*, 1578 ; and *Euphues and his England*, 1580 ; though popular at court, he received little pecuniary recognition ; retired, and is lost to sight, 1598.

**Euphues** is a picture of the model gentleman : courtly, amorous, witty, fond of learning. The book has no plot, but the characters almost become individuals, and give us a picture of contemporary manners ; also of contemporary taste, inasmuch as it was extremely popular in courtly and cultured circles. "A brave, righteous and pious book" (Kingsley) ; its moralizings are frequent and prolonged. It started the craze of euphuism, a literary affectation which made much of antithesis, alliteration, and "idle similes" based upon a quaint natural history ; clever sometimes, but tedious in the end. *Euphues* was rivalled in literary influence only by Sidney's *Arcadia*.

**Robert Greene** (1560–92) : M.A. of Oxford and Cambridge and a man of dissolute life, came to London, 1583, and for ten years wrote feverishly for his living ; followed the fashion of *Euphues* and *Arcadia*, but with touches of naturalness peculiar to himself ; has a niche for himself also in the history of the drama (p. 88) ; wrote here and there in his novels a few excellent lyrics. Chief novels : *Mamilia*, 1583 ; *Euphues*

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*Censure to Philautus*, 1587; *Pandosto*, 1588 (the original of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*) ; and *Menaphon*, 1589 : the last two being the most readable of this group of novels. The personal pamphlets, *The Repentance of Robin Greene* and *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, 1592, throw interesting sidelights on himself and contemporaries. His prose style was fluent and vigorous ; his versatility remarkable ; his touches of tender feeling noteworthy, especially in his drawing of female character.

**Thomas Lodge** (1558–1625) : another of the “university wits,” had a varied career in which literature played a subordinate part ; his one good story is *Rosalynde : Euphues Golden Legacie*, 1590, an idyllic pastoral romance, with a euphuistic flavour, and the basis of *As You Like It* ; also wrote *A Defence of Stage Plays*, 1579 ; *An Alarum against Usurers*, 1584 ; *Phillis* (a sonnet-sequence), 1591 ; *A Looking-glass for London and England* (in conjunction with Greene), 1594 ; *A Fig for Momus* (a Horatian satire), 1595 ; partial translations of Josephus and Seneca, 1602–14 ; besides practising as a physician : sufficient work to show his ready versatility.

**Thomas Nash** (1567–1600) : another “university wit” is chiefly distinguished for vigorous and audacious prose satire ; but he also wrote our first novel of varied adventures, and anticipated Defoe, in *The Life of Jack Wilton*, 1594. He joined in the Martin Marprelate controversy (see p. 80), 1589 ; and also wrote *Piers Pennilesse and His Supplication to the Devil*, 1592 ; *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, 1593 ; *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, 1597—against Harvey ; *Lenten Stuff*, 1597 ; *Will Summer's last Will and Testament*, 1600, containing his beautiful lyric, “Spring.” He was a jovial bohemian, with a pungent gift of satire ; indomitably personal in substance and style ; eschewed euphuism ; was fond of classical allusions and illustrated his diction with high-sounding Latinisms and Italianate words.

## II. LITERARY CRITICISM

Much attention was given to the theoretical principles of poetry by Ascham, Sidney, and most of the leading writers of the time. The disputes centred round the use of rime which Ascham had censured as barbarous ; and many attempts were made to coerce English into Latin metres. From the failures emerged true ideas of scansion ; the strict hexameter, built on the principle of quantity, was seen to be unworkable ; but a correct accentual scansion was developed.

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

**Gabriel Harvey** (1547–1630): a scholar and pedant of Cambridge, was a strong champion of the classical methods; influenced Spenser and Sidney; attacked Greene, and had to deal with Nash; wrote much that is forgotten and failed in his main aim.

**William Webbe** (? 1568–91): wrote a *Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1586, advocating the views of the scholars, but praising Spenser's *Shephearde's Calender*.

**George Puttenham**, of whom nothing is known, in *The Art of English Poesie*, 1589, follows the same general course; his work has greater value, for its really philosophical handling of the general principles of poetry.

**Stephen Gosson** (1555–1624): made an attack on the stage in *The School of Abuse*, 1579, in a strongly Puritan vein, which provoked several replies, notably Sidney's *Apologie* (p. 70).

**Francis Meres** (1565–1647): compiled a kind of compendium of contemporary wits in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, which contains an essay in which English poets are favourably compared with those of Greece, Rome and Italy. Justice is done to Shakespeare and Spenser.

**Thomas Campion** (see p. 77): opposed rime, but pleaded for the correct use of iambic and trochaic verse; and **Samuel Daniel** in his eloquent and high-minded *Defence of Rime* (1602) pleaded that nature is before art, and custom before law. The position ultimately arrived at can be seen in **Ben Jonson**'s commonplace book of notes and aphorisms, entitled *Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Mather*, composed at intervals, and printed 1641.

## III. RELIGIOUS PROSE

Note: the rise of Puritanism—at Cambridge under Cartwright, the professor of Divinity, c. 1570; in the Church itself under Grindal (archbishop of Canterbury, 1576–83); in the tone of such writers as Spenser. Persecution followed, culminating in the exodus of the *Mayflower*, 1620; and in the Civil War.

**Martin Marprelate**, the pseudonymous author of an "Epistle to the Terrible Priest of the Convocation-house," started a violent and scurrilous controversy directed against the bishops. The pamphlet was answered by Cooper, bishop of Winchester, in an "Admonition to the People of England," which provoked a reply entitled "Hay any work for the Cooper?" Llyly and Nash supported the bishops—and the stage; the bitter war of personal lampoons went on till, 1593, John Penry, who printed the works of Martin surreptitiously, was executed.

**Richard Hooker** (? 1554–1600): a native of Devonshire; went to Oxford as a scholar, 1567; fellow of Corpus, 1577; took

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orders, 1581, and married (unhappily) ; appointed master of the Temple, 1585 ; joined in controversy with Travers, his Puritan predecessor ; accepted the living of Boscombe (Wilts), 1591 ; was transferred to Bishopsbourne (Kent), 1595, where he died. Wrote the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Books I-IV, 1594; V, 1597; VI, VIII, 1648; VII, 1662).

His one work is a reasoned defence of the Church of England as a *via media* between Roman Catholicism and Presbyterianism ; vindicates the traditional claims of the Church ; supports the ritual of the Church, Episcopalianism and the Royal supremacy : all in a manner which gave (and still gives) great satisfaction to members of the Church of England. It is scholarly, learned, conscientious ; written in a style of austere dignity, rising at times to grandeur ; complex in its periods, vague in its logic, it satisfies by the solemnity of its music. Hooker, a man of peaceful, almost weak, personal disposition, was unfitted for controversy, but a peculiarly suitable advocate of the compromise which was for him the way of peace and reason.

Much religious writing flowed from other pens, but its interest is now merely historical.

**The Authorized Version of the Bible**, 1611, was set afoot by James I, after the Hampton Court Conference, 1604 ; he chose the 47 revisers, who worked in six companies and included the best scholars of the day. It is based on the Bishops' Bible of 1568, with help from Tyndale's, Coverdale's, the Geneva, and other versions, and contains the result of a century of work on the text. In style its excellences have always been recognized ; the language is slightly archaic, but always well-chosen and appropriate, simple but dignified, well-balanced but not florid or ornate ; the whole work is at the same high level ; a wonderful example of impersonal labour ; no book is more quoted, none more familiar ; it has been the one bond of union between the very numerous English sects.

**Lancelot Andrewes** (1555-1626) : bishop of London, 1605, one of the 47, was a preacher and theologian of repute in his day ; he compiled in Latin a *Manual of Private Devotions*, translated 1648, and *Preces Privatæ*, 1675—long valued, even to the time of Newman.

## IV. MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

**Books of Travel.** The voyages of Drake, Frobisher, Davis, etc., provided an abundance of material which was best used by **Richard Hakluyt** (1552-1616) in his *Voyages* ("The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation"), 1589 ; a bald but vigorous narrative in summary form. **Samuel Purchas** (1577-1626) wrote a "Pilgrimage" and followed

## AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Hakluyt in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 1625. **Thomas Coryate** (1577–1617), an eccentric personage, wrote an equally eccentric account of a journey through Europe in *Coryates Crudities Hastily Gobbled Up*, 1611. These and many similar compilations have little value as literature, but are often interesting.

**Sir Walter Raleigh** (1552–1618): soldier, sailor, explorer, colonizer, courtier, poet, was a good prose-writer also; no Elizabethan is more representative of the many-sided activities of his time; he conspired on behalf of Arabella Stuart in the Main Plot, 1603, and was sentenced to death; after an unfortunate voyage to South America, 1616, he was executed. He wrote *Discovery of the Empire of Guiana*, 1596, relating his search for El Dorado, 1595; and *A History of the World*, 1614. The latter is confused and ill-balanced, and of no value as history, but contains some fine passages of prose, e.g. the Preface, and the closing passage on death.

**Translators.** Much translation in prose as well as verse was done, and two works deserve to be specially mentioned.

**Sir Thomas North** (? 1535–1600): gave us the *Plutarch* known to Shakespeare, 1579; it was based upon the French of Jacques Amyot (1513–93), whom he followed perhaps too closely; nevertheless his prose was good, and he entered fully into the spirit of the book.

**John Florio** (1553–1625): an Italian refugee in England, well-known at Court, translated Montaigne's *Essais*, 1603; his book has much of the irregular charm of the original; if not literal, it is a faithful interpretation of his author.

**Antiquaries and Scholars.** The names of Sir Robert Cotton (1571–1631) and Sir Thomas Bodley (1545–1613) will be remembered for their libraries, now at the British Museum and Oxford, rather than by their writings. William Camden (1551–1623) and John Stow (1525–1605) left us valuable memorials of their time: Stow's *Survey of London*, 1598, is an authority as guide to Elizabethan London.

**Sir Henry Wotton** (1568–1639): scholar and diplomatist, left behind much work on History, Education, Architecture, showing a cultured mind; but survives in literature for two short poems—“How happy is he born and taught” and “You meaner beauties of the night,” and because Izaak Walton wrote a delightful *Life* of him.

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**John Selden** (1584–1654): was a great lawyer, an authority on ancient law ; wrote a famous work on tithes which brought him into trouble ; but is remembered entirely by his *Table Talk*, 1689,—a shrewd, rather cynical work, showing much insight into human character, considerable humour, and an attractive style.

## F. Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

### I. LIFE

(a) **Biographical** : Born at York House, Strand, 1561 ; son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, keeper of the Great Seal : his father an intriguing statesman : his mother a learned woman and a strict Calvinist ; showed exceptional precocity as a boy ; went to Cambridge, 1573 ; admitted to Gray's Inn, 1576 ; at Paris in the suite of the British ambassador, 1576–9 ; entered Parliament, 1584 ; in spite of addresses to the Queen and Burghley, failed to obtain preferment ; became attached to Essex, who sought to push his claims, 1594 ; received an estate from Essex, 1595 ; wrote his *Promus*, a collection of Machiavellian precepts, 1594–5 ; drew up the official charge against Essex, 1601 ; conciliated James I with much obsequiousness, 1604 ; married the daughter of a London alderman, 1606 ; became solicitor-general, 1607, and clerk to the Star Chamber, 1608 ; promoted attorney-general, 1613 ; joined the supporters of Buckingham and received the Great Seal, 1617 ; became Lord High Chancellor with a peerage (Lord Verulam), 1618 ; Viscount St. Albans, 1621 ; impeached for bribery, 1621, found guilty, fined and deprived of his honours ; retired to his estate at Gorhambury, and devoted himself to literary and scientific pursuits ; died of a cold caught in making experiments on refrigeration, 1626.

(b) **Public Work** : Immersed in public life, he was too much occupied with schemes for his personal advancement. He often gave advice to Elizabeth and James I, but it was not always honest ; he was obsequious, and did not think it wrong to hide his correct diagnoses of public needs to please the king or

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queen. He supported Essex, only so long as he was a favourite ; he was even more subservient to Buckingham. As a lawyer he was above the average. As a judge he was overawed by Buckingham, but though he took presents from suitors he did not pervert the course of justice. He was too much of a time-server to leave the impression on his age which his political knowledge and insight should have left.

(c) **Literary Work**: *Essays* (1st edition of 10, 1597; 2nd edition of 39, 1612; 3rd edition of 58, 1625); *The Advancement of Learning*, 1605; *Novum Organum*, 1620; *Reign of Henry VII*, 1622; *De Augmentis*, 1622; *Sylva Sylvarum*, and *The New Atlantis*, both published in 1627.

(d) **Character** : "Wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind" (Pope) ; in his lifelong devotion to knowledge, he appears as a very great man indeed ; in his political life, he seems to have been another man entirely. Two ambitions fought for his mind, irreconcilable ones. He loved power and wealth, as well as science and philosophy. His moral standard was that of Machiavelli ; he fawned to the great and powerful, even when they were unworthy ; his ingratitude to Essex was of the basest kind. His cynical worldly wisdom brought his ruin at the end. His slow advancement was perhaps due to the shrewd insight of Elizabeth and James' minister, Cecil, into his character. Yet, in the midst of his struggles for place, he wrote his greatest works, and kept his enthusiasm for learning undimmed.

## II. WORKS

**Essays**: doubtless inspired by Montaigne, but different in tone and spirit ; they are rather collections of terse and carefully-pointed aphorisms than discursive rambles round and about his subject ; as such, they are the most brilliant of their kind in English ; witty, rich in apt allusion and fit illustration ; pregnant in meaning ; condensing into compact and memorable form the wisdom of experience ; sometimes, as on political themes, in a weak spirit of compromise ; cold and crystalline ; sometimes not unequal to the high theme, as in *Truth, Studies,*

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Death; always interesting, suggestive, crisply sententious; many of his sentences have passed into everyday thought as proverbs.

**The Advancement of Learning:** intended as a preface to his complete scheme of philosophy; not in the terse style of the essays, but in a rich, flowing, eloquent prose almost rhetorical in its enthusiasm; a view of the state of learning in England at the time; an acute criticism of the defects and their causes; including an analysis of human knowledge; shows the importance of a fuller knowledge of history, of natural philosophy and of human philosophy; discusses many questions of psychology in a clear and simple way; insists on the importance of the Reason; warns against prejudice, coincidence, deception by words, personal equation, as obstacles to knowledge; claims that Logic is more important than Rhetoric; undervalues poetry and subordinates Imagination to Reason; dilates upon the proper use of knowledge in daily life; and tries to indicate the foundations of virtue:—this, and much more is the staple of a great book, which provokes criticism frequently, but admiration also for its high style and genuine enthusiasm. It was turned into Latin with additions in the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*.

**Novum Organum:** the first part of his projected exposition of a new system of knowledge; written in Latin; its main purport to overthrow the deductive method of Aristotle and the schoolmen, and to substitute induction as the true method of advancing knowledge: to replace Authority by Experience; shows the need of careful mental training in order to distinguish the truth in phenomena; appeals again to Reason as the sole guide; thus laying the foundations of modern scientific method. His system incomplete; himself not abreast of the scientific knowledge of the time: e.g. he was not up-to-date in astronomy, did not realize the significance of Copernicus, Kepler, or Galileo; did not know of Gilbert's work on Magnetism, or Harvey's on the circulation of the blood; yet an invaluable stimulus and a light on the road of science; not a philosopher in the sense of Locke or Descartes or Spinoza, he ignored final causes, and was content to serve merely practical ends.

**The New Atlantis:** a fragment of a new Utopia left unfinished at his death; the new Atlantis is an island inhabited by a race to whom the highest wisdom has been revealed; its special feature a temple of knowledge or institution for the advancement of science; acute in detail, it is chiefly valuable for its general aim.

**History of Henry VII:** an excellent account of a monarch who was a successful example of Bacon's principles; in clear and dignified English; good in narrative and in the analysis of character and motive; impartial, and still valuable as a model for the treatment of personal history.

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## III. INFLUENCE

As a writer, Bacon was troubled by a false theory ; he did not believe in the permanence of English as a literary language, and hence wrote the works for which he expected immortality in Latin. He is thus an English classic in spite of himself ; but his style did not find a school, nor has it been successfully imitated. He represents the climax of the English Renaissance on the side of learning ; but he gave to politics "what was meant for mankind," and did not carry his principles to their logical limit. Yet he paved the way for the Boyles and Newtons of a later day.

### Appreciations.

He had the sound, distinct, comprehensive knowledge of Aristotle with all the beautiful lights, graces and embellishments of Cicero.—ADDISON.

He may be compared with those liberators of nations who have given them laws by which they might govern themselves, and retained no homage but their gratitude.—HAJLAM.

It was not by furnishing philosophers with rules for performing the inductive process well, but by furnishing them with a motive for performing it well, that he conferred so great a benefit on society.—MACAULAY.

He not only understood and felt what science might be, but he was able to make others understand and feel it too. And he was able to do this because he was one of the most wonderful of thinkers and one of the greatest of writers. . . . He was able to interest the world in the great prospects opening on it, but of which none but a few students had the key.—CHURCH.

Few scientific pretenders have made more mistakes than Lord Bacon. . . . Ignorant himself of every branch of mathematics, he presumed that they were useless in science, but a few years before Newton achieved by their aid his immortal discoveries. It is time that the sacred name of philosopher should be severed from its long connexion with that of one who was a pretender in science, a time-serving politician, an insidious lawyer, a corrupt judge, a treacherous friend, a bad man.—DRAPER.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

#### A. Forerunners

##### I. HISTORICAL NOTES

SEE Chapter IV. D. Dramatic performances gradually become professional ; such actors first heard of in Henry VI's reign ; Richard III kept a special company of players ; Henry VII licensed two special companies ; yet actors and acting remained in disrepute ; the growth of Puritan influence in Elizabeth's reign accentuated this ; influence of the Court in favour of the drama.

**Important Dates.** First Act to regulate the Stage, 1543 ; first mention of the Master of the Revels, 1546 ; proclamation forbidding playing of Interludes without licence, 1553 ; act to regulate itinerant actors and minstrels, 1572 ; Earl of Leicester's company licensed, 1574 ; playhouses built at Blackfriars and Shoreditch, outside the City, 1576 ; in 1594 only two companies licensed—the Lord Chamberlain's (Shakespeare, Burbage, Kemp) and the Lord Admiral's (Alleyne, Henslowe) ; Globe Theatre built, 1596 ; Lord Chamberlain's company became the King's servants, 1603 ; right of authorizing plays vested in the King alone, 1603 ; H.M. servants licensed to play out of town, 1618 ; actresses first appeared, 1629 ; ordinance to stop the performance of plays, 1642 ; all players declared rogues, 1648.

**Attacks on the Stage.** John Northgate's Treatise wherein dicing, dancing, vain plays and interludes are reproved, 1577 ; Gosson's *School of Abuse*, 1579 ; Philip Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses*, 1583 ; *Touchstone of the Time*, by George Whetstone (p. 66), 1586 ; Martin Marprelate, 1588 ; "The rich Cabinet furnished with a variety of Inscriptions," 1616 ; "Short Treatise of Stage Plays," 1625 ; William Prynne's *Histriomastix*, 1632.

##### II. BEFORE SHAKESPEARE

**John Lyly** (p. 78) : assistant to the Master of the Revels ; wrote dramas for the Court ; made comedy witty, graceful,

## AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

scholarly and refined ; dialogue excellent ; characterization and plot poor ; effective use of mythology ; occasional lyrics introduced ; made comedy literary, and undoubtedly influenced Shakespeare ; *Campaspe*, printed 1584 ; *Sapho and Phaon*, 1586 ; *Endimion*, 1591 ; *Galathea*, 1592 ; *Midas*, 1592 ; *Mother Bombie*, 1594 ; *The Woman in the Moon*, 1597 ; *Love's Metamorphosis*, 1601 : all written and played earlier. "A string of impertinent and farcical jests" (Hazlitt) : too severe for *Campaspe* and *Endimion* at least.

**Robert Greene** (p. 78) : as dramatist was unskilful in construction, but has agreeable scenes ; was a poet, with pleasing faculty of drawing female characters ; wrote *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, 1588 (?)—a combination of "history" magic and idyll, containing the delightful love-story of Edward I, Lacy, and Margaret of Fressingfield ; *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* ; *James IV*, with the fine characters of Ida and Queen Dorothea ; *George a Greene*, dramatizing the old legend of the pinner of Wakefield : all printed after his death (1592) ; *Selimus*, a confused tragedy, is ascribed to him by Grosart ; probably he was concerned with the early stages of *Henry VI*.

**George Peele** (1558-98) : another of the "university wits" ; had more in common with the mediæval drama than his companions ; was famous for his spectacular masques—e.g. the *Arraignment of Paris*, 1584 ; wrote *Edward I*, a poor chronicle-history, printed 1593 ; *The Old Wives' Tale*, 1595—an extravaganza of the interlude-type ; and *David and Bethsabe*, 1599—a scriptural play, with some poetical passages.

**Thomas Kyd** (1558-95) : a London scrivener, famous for his single play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, printed 1594 : a melo-drama of exceptional power ; in high sounding blank verse, which often becomes rant, but also touches heights of tragic horror, denied to any of his predecessors ; possibly anterior to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, and to *Titus Andronicus*, with which it may be compared. Kyd possibly the author of the lost, early *Hamlet*.

**Christopher Marlowe** (1564-87) : son of a shoemaker ; educated at King's School, Canterbury ; B.A. Cambridge, 1583 ; M.A., 1587 ; dramatist to the Lord Admiral's company ; wrote his four great tragedies, 1587-90 ; killed in a tavern-brawl at Deptford, 1593.

**Tamburlaine** : Part I, 1587 ; Part II, 1590 ; introduced the "heroic" drama and the "mighty line" of his blank verse ; made a play both popular and literary ; its theme the lust for dominion ; crude and bombastic ; over-rhetorical ; but abounding in vitality and fine poetry ; the hero and his wife Zenocrate have flashes of real nobility and greatness.

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**Doctor Faustus**: acted, 1588 ; based upon an old German legend, attached to a real Dr. Faustus (*f.* 1500-40) and made popular by a book printed in Frankfort, 1587 ; its theme the lust for knowledge, and the power derived from it ; written with great intensity and passion ; glowing poetry ; a series of dramatic scenes with but loose connexion ; the close one of the most tragically great in literature ; its humour coarse, incongruous, and dependent ; otherwise he rises to the full height of his argument ; highly praised by Goethe, 1829.

**The Jew of Malta** : acted, 1589 (?) ; entered on stationers' register, 1594 ; printed, 1633 ; its theme the lust for wealth ; a well-constructed play ; opens magnificently, but ends in melodramatic horror ; the Jew, Barabbas, begins as a man, but ends as an incarnate passion.

**Edward II** : written, 1590 ; published, 1594 ; based upon Holinshed and Stow ; treated with the freedom of Shakespeare ; the old chronicle-history outgrown and superseded ; quieter than Marlowe's other work ; the King himself not so interesting as Richard II ; other characters—e.g. Gaveston, Mortimer, Kent—not ill drawn ; the death-scene reaches the utmost limit of tragic horror.

**Poems** : the unfinished *Hero and Leander*, printed 1598, is the finest example of the mythological romance ; in beautiful, sensuous heroic couplets ; shows a great delight in physical beauty ; "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love," printed in *England's Helicon*, 1600, is a pleasant lyric ; translations of Ovid and Lucan have no special merit ; and his unfinished plays, *The Massacre of Paris* and *Dido* are unworthy of his genius.

Marlowe the original genius required by the groping drama ; an innovator ; a daring explorer in untravelled seas ; superior to fashions—wrote no sonnets, love-lyrics or pastoral novels ; lived a wild life ; was a typical man of the Renaissance ; audacious in thought ; determined to be himself ; regarded as an atheist ; claimed the whole sphere of man's interests for the drama ; a lust for the unattainable the motive of his mind ; his rebellious defiance personified in Faustus ; died too young to tame and discipline his genius ; lacked humour and sweetness ; could not individualize character, nor delineate an attractive woman ; yet was the pioneer of our romantic drama ; the indispensable forerunner of Shakespeare ; found blank verse a clumsy and inharmonious instrument ; gave it a natural rhythm,

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a flexibility and variety of cadence only surpassed in Shakespeare.

## B. Shakespeare

### I. LIFE AND WORKS

(a) Scanty knowledge about Shakespeare's external circumstances ; born at Stratford-on-Avon, April 23, 1564 ; son of a well-to-do burgess ; probably had a fair grammar-school education—with a "little Latin and less Greek" ; married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, 1582 ; came to London, c. 1586 ; joined the Earl of Leicester's company ; became an actor ; played before the Queen, 1594 ; began his work as adapter and author of plays, c. 1589 ; published *Venus and Adonis*, 1593, and the *Rape of Lucrece*, 1594—dedicated to the Earl of Southampton ; became a prosperous man, 1594-9 ; obtained a coat of arms, 1599 ; continued to write for the King's servants, after 1603 ; retired to New Place, Stratford, c. 1611 ; ended his career as dramatist, but perhaps collaborated a little with Fletcher, c. 1612 ; died, April 23, 1616, leaving two daughters.

(b) Reputation : High during his own time ; envy of Greene at his early success (*A Groatsworth of Wit* : p. 79) ; patronage of the Queen, nobility, James I ; the best actors helped his work ; praised by Spenser ; referred to by Francis Meres, 1598 ; Ben Jonson's tribute in the First Folio, 1623 ; Milton's sonnet—"What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones ?" (1630) ; fall of his reputation during the Restoration and classical periods ; not truly revived till the romantic movement ; important influence of Lessing, W. Schlegel, Goethe, Coleridge.

(c) Editions : No care taken by him to collect his plays ; some published in quarto during his life ; First Folio, 1623, collected by two friends and fellow-actors, Heminge and Condell ; Second Folio, 1632 ; Third Folio, 1663 ; the works edited by Nicholas Rowe, 1709 ; by Pope, 1725 ; by Lewis Theobald, 1733—the first

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valuable critical edition ; by Johnson, 1765 ; by Edmund Malone, 1778 ; by Alexander Dyce, 1857, and many other editions during the nineteenth century, including the "Cambridge Shakespeare" (9 vols., 1863-6) and the "Leopold Shakspere" (the text of Prof. Delius, edited by Prof. F. J. Furnivall, *Cassell*, 1876). Translations into most European languages ; adequately into German by W. Schlegel and Tieck, 1797-1833 ; into French prose by the son of Victor Hugo, 1859-66. The facts of his life sketched by Rowe and Malone ; expanded and examined by Halliwell-Phillips, 1881, and Sir Sidney Lee, 1898 and 1915.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF HIS POWERS

Most of the plays now dated with reasonable approximation to the truth ; the evidence sometimes conclusive from external or internal references ; the evidence of style and metre also helpful. In the early plays the verse conventional and clever ; no freedom of rhythm ; no liberties with the metre ; riming lines frequent ; puns, conceits, quibbles, affectations, frequent ; not greatly imaginative ; showing little penetrative insight into character, and no great originality (Period I, 1590-4). As he gained confidence, his treatment more original and powerful on its human side ; his poetry more splendid—its rhythm varied and beautiful—its imagery approaching to perfect fusion with the idea expressed ; the lines not monotonously end-stopped, overflowing into more harmonious periods ; the themes treated romantically and in a buoyant, optimistic vein (Period II, 1594-9). In the maturity of his powers, the higher qualities still more prominent ; treatment still bolder and deeper ; the verse stronger, with even more freedom ; run-on lines very frequent ; light endings (i.e. lines ending with unemphatic words like *and*, *if*, *for*) become common ; the great tragedies rich in wisdom, profound insight into character, vivid and highly imaginative diction (Period III, 1599-1608). Finally, his verse became more unconventional still ; light endings, run-on lines, extra syllables, trochaic feet, feminine endings, no rime except in the songs ; yet always wonderfully fitting and beautiful (Period IV, 1609-12). Thus, his works cannot be said to show any real falling off : from 1594 to 1611 he was always equal to his theme ; diction and thought were exactly what the characters required.

## III. THE PLAYS

(a) **Period I:** Here his work is (i) that of adapter of previous work by Marlowe, Greene or others ; (ii)

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comedy which developed the artifical style of Lyly, witty or romantic ; (iii) historical plays in emulation of Marlowe's ; (iv) *Romeo and Juliet*.

**King Henry VI, Parts I-III:** Part I merely the revision of a previous chronicle-history, acted 1592 ; Part II a remodelling of the *Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, printed 1594 ; Part III a similar rewriting of the *True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*, 1595 ; probably all contain work by Marlowe, Greene, and Peele also.

**Titus Andronicus:** acted, 1594 ; printed in quarto, 1600 ; a sensational melodrama of horrors ; not likely to be Shakespeare's sole work ; probably an adaptation of a successful play by Kyd or an unknown dramatist of his school.

**Love's Labour's Lost :** c. 1590 ; quarto, 1598 ; his first wholly original play ; the only one with an original plot ; a comedy written under the influence of Lyly ; shows considerable skill in versification, but on conventional lines, with plenty of rime ; witty and amusing ; characters named from contemporary France (Navarre, Biron, Longaville) ; genial satire on contemporary manners—e.g. euphuism, pedantry, Spaniards (Armado, Moth, Holofernes) ; bright and clever ; a great advance on any previous comedy.

**Two Gentlemen of Verona :** c. 1591 ; folio, 1623 ; obtained from Spanish and Italian novels—Montemayor's *Diana* and Cinthio's *Apollonius and Sylla* ; a sentimental romantic comedy with some pretty poetic passages ; characterization weak : yet Sylvia and Julia, Launce and Speed, foreshadow triumphs in the same style later.

**The Comedy of Errors :** c. 1591 ; folio, 1623 ; owed something to Plautus' *Menæchmi* and *Amphitruo* ; a lively farce ; with plenty of genuine amusement ; not truly a comedy.

**Richard III :** c. 1593 ; quarto, 1597 ; based on Holinshed's *Chronicle* ; a play dominated by a single character ; a monster of crime, conceived in Marlowe's manner ; written entirely in rhetorical blank verse ; Richard a fine character for a tragic actor.

**Richard II :** c. 1593 ; first quarto, 1597 (without the deposition scene) ; complete quarto, 1608 ; in emulation of Marlowe's *Edward II* ; a similar study, freely based on Holinshed ; but shows less of Marlowe's influence than *Richard III* ; contains some fine poetry, including Gaunt's famous apostrophe to England ; the King's character developed with subtle power.

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**Romeo and Juliet** : c. 1591-4 ; quartos, 1597, 1599 ; the root of the story very old ; obtained from Arthur Brooke's verse translation of a novel by Bandello (1562) ; Mercutio a new character ; a play of great beauty and romantic interest ; the most poetic love-play in literature ; occasional strain after artificial effects—deliberately in Mercutio ; the tragic passion not injured by this ; Juliet's Nurse, his first creation of realistic comedy.

(b) **Period II**: Comedies and Histories developed on his own lines.

**King John** : 1594 ; folio, 1623 ; based upon *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, a poor play of 1591 ; a stronger and more original development of character than in earlier histories ; yet not wholly pleasing ; scene between Arthur and Hubert pathetic ; Faulconbridge a live personality ; many strong touches in the King, and his queen Constance.

**A Midsummer Night's Dream** : c. 1594-5 ; two quartos, 1600 ; has elements from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, Plutarch, Ovid, and Lord Berners' *Huon of Bordeaux* (Oberon) ; the fusion of the three elements—the love-intrigue, the fairies and the mechanicals—Shakespeare's own ; full of graceful poetry and humour broad and gay ; in Puck and the fairies brought folk-lore into drama ; in Bottom and his companions opened a mine of new humour ; in Theseus created a noble type of manhood.

**The Merchant of Venice** : c. 1594-5 ; quarto, 1600 ; again a fusion of elements from different sources : the bond-story from Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone*, and the casket story from *Gesta Romanorum* ; Shylock suggested by the *Jew of Malta*, also by the execution of the Queen's Jewish physician, Don Rodrigo Lopez, 1594 ; the plot wildly improbable ; but the play a great one through the masterly study of Shylock ; the intellectual grace of Portia and the charming episode of Lorenzo and Jessica, the magnificent verse, also noteworthy.

**The Taming of the Shrew** : ? 1595 ; folio, 1623 ; revision of the *Taming of a Shrew*, 1594, a comedy, by an unknown author ; spirited and witty, but on the whole not at Shakespeare's level ; the induction and the scenes between Petruchio and Katharine probably his ; date uncertain.

**All's Well that Ends Well** : ? 1595-6 ; folio, 1623 ; main plot derived from Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, translations of Italian novels of Boccaccio, etc. ; a strong play, but containing evidences of his earlier manner ; Helena a fine female character ; Parolles a bragging soldier who provides the humour of the piece ; the Countess of Roussillon,

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Bertram, Lafeu, also well-drawn studies ; date very uncertain ; possibly = *Love's Labour's Won* mentioned by Meres, 1598 ; seems to have been revised about 1601.

**Henry IV**: Part I, 1596-7; quarto, 1598 : Part II, 1597-8; quarto, 1600 : drawn from Holinshed and a poor popular play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*; the historical characters—the King, Hotspur, Glendower, etc.,—well drawn ; chief interest centres in the humorous scenes, with Sir John Falstaff, the king of the realm of humour, as their chief ; personal reminiscences in Justice Shallow.

**Merry Wives of Windsor** : c. 1599 ; quarto, 1602 ; original except for suggestions from Italian novels ; full of boisterous fun ; reflects the life of the tradesman class ; said (by Rowe) to have been written by the Queen's command, to show Falstaff in love.

**Henry V** : 1599 ; quarto, 1600 ; sources as in *Henry IV* ; the climax of the historical series ; the King, Shakespeare's idea of a patriot-monarch ; fine speeches put into his mouth ; excellent comedy provided by Fluellen and Macmorris, Pistol and Bardolph ; a prologue used at the beginning of each act to jump over time ; loosely constructed, but the interest sustained.

(c) **Period III**: That of mature comedy, leading into the series of great tragedies ; these plays the *ne plus ultra* of dramatic literature ; masterly in conception and execution ; the endings only of a few of them can be criticized.

**As You Like It** : 1600 ; folio, 1623 ; dramatization of Lodge's *Euphues Golden Legacie*, 1590 ; Jaques, Touchstone, and Audrey new characters ; a comedy of the greenwood ; joyous and bright with an undertone of irony ; Rosalind full of wit and spirit ; Orlando the chivalrous lover, more conventional ; Touchstone the cleverest of his fools ; Jaques and the Duke, two opposite aspects of worldly wisdom.

**Much Ado about Nothing** : quarto, 1600 ; folio, 1623 ; story of Hero and Claudio in Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (trans. Sir J. Harington, 1591) ; the best parts of the play—Beatrice and Benedick, Dogberry and Verges—original ; these characters are responsible for the wit, humour and real comedy ; Claudio a careful portrait of the selfish gallant.

**Twelfth Night** : acted, 1602 ; folio, 1623 ; source a novel of Bandello ; an almost perfect comedy in spite of an improbable plot ; the comic scenes and characters—Sir

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Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Maria, Feste—unrivalled; Malvolio a most popular stage figure; the romantic heroines, Viola and Olivia, delightful.

**Troilus and Cressida** : ? 1602-3; quarto, 1609; founded on Chaucer and Lydgate; possibly suggested by a lost play on the same theme by Dekker and Chettle; a finely-written play, lacking in dramatic interest; cynical in tone and treatment; may have been a satire—his contribution to the ‘war of the theatres’ of 1601-2: if so, the key is not visible.

**Measure for Measure** : ? 1603; folio, 1623; based upon George Whetstone’s drama, *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, and his version of the *Heptameron* of Marguerite of Navarre, 1582; an unpleasant play; with powerful scenes, sententious poetry, and one fine character, Isabella; date difficult to determine; not early, but difficult to place it after *Hamlet*.

**Julius Cæsar** : c. 1601; folio, 1623; based upon the lives of Cæsar, Brutus and Antony in North’s *Plutarch*; the first of the great tragedies; the tragedy results here, as always in Shakespeare, from the weakness of the hero, who is not equal to the conflict with circumstances which surround him; Brutus a noble character but a tool of Cassius and Antony; not their equal in worldly wisdom; saw too clearly the good side of Cæsar; a philosopher and idealist out of his true place.

**Hamlet** : 1602; first quarto (a rough text), 1603; second quarto (still imperfect), 1604; the modern text collated from the second quarto and the folio; origin—an older play by Kyd (?), performed 1589, and Belleforest’s *Histoires Tragiques*, 1570; the most popular of all the plays; many familiar passages now semi-proverbial; a tragedy of introspective irresolution; Hamlet himself the centre of the whole action; a fascinating personality; characters of Ophelia, Polonius, Horatio, the Queen, help to bring him out; humour in Polonius, the gravediggers, and in Hamlet’s criticisms of actors.

**Othello** : acted, 1604; quarto, 1622; story drawn from Cinthio’s *Hecatommithi*; a magnificent acting play; perfectly constructed; characters, incidents, language, perfectly harmonized; a tragedy of blind jealousy; Othello morally at fault in suspecting Desdemona; the end very moving; Desdemona as splendid as Iago is villainous.

**Macbeth** : c. 1605-6; folio, 1623; source—Holinshed; as history the incidents unreliable; the play probably written as a compliment to James I; a tragedy of condensed and lurid power; its theme ambition, which ruins Lady Macbeth; Macbeth himself the victim of an intense

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imagination which he cannot master ; an atmosphere of horror everywhere, especially in the Witch scenes ; unequal and rapid workmanship suggest an imperfect text, or some collaboration (?).

**King Lear** : acted, 1606 ; two quartos, 1608 ; sources Holinshed, the chronicle-history of King Leir, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (II, x) ; the tragedy of human nature itself ; Lear's weakness that of senility—old age at bay with all the evil storms of nature ; its terrible pathos and grim power ; no drama treats so great a theme with such intellectual and imaginative grandeur ; Goneril, Regan, Cordelia ; Edgar, Edmund, the Fool ; Kent, Gloucester : all share in the wild chorus that is like a cataclysm of nature.

**Timon of Athens** : c. 1607 ; folio, 1623 ; source doubtful : probably Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* ; an inferior *King Lear* ; lacks the intensity and power of that play ; possibly produced in collaboration with someone ; still the best passages, and Timon himself, too good for any known writer except Shakespeare.

**Antony and Cleopatra** : 1607-8 ; folio, 1623 ; origin—Plutarch's life of Antony ; the greatest of the Roman plays ; not constructed on the intense method of the previous tragedies ; Antony's weakness his infatuation for the siren Cleopatra ; yet not wholly a lover : the statesman and soldier fight in him for supremacy, but fail ; Cleopatra the most subtly studied of Shakespeare's women.

**Coriolanus** : c. 1609 ; folio, 1623 ; source—Plutarch ; a tragedy of overweening pride which ruins a great and generous nature ; the play intense and concentrated ; full of power and imagination ; but difficult and elliptical in language ; the verse free and much licence taken in the metre ; an interesting political study : does it reflect Shakespeare's contempt for democracy, or an admiration of stern despotism ?

(d) **Period IV** : Plays romantic, but serious ; show some influence from the style of a new dramatist, John Fletcher ; a repetition of the manner of the earlier comedies, with greater freedom in verse, and a more pronounced maturity of tone.

**Cymbeline** : 1610-11 ; folio, 1623 ; from Holinshed and a story by Boccaccio ; plot very improbable ; many anachronisms ; but some fine scenes, and the character of Imogen—the most finished and delightful of Shakespeare's romantic heroines ; Iachimo at times fills his rôle of villain admirably ; but Posthumus is almost as unworthy of Imogen as the fool Cloten.

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**A Winter's Tale** : acted, 1611 ; folio, 1623 ; from Greene's *Pandosto*, 1588 ; Autolycus and Paulina original ; a delightful romance ; full of improbabilities and confusion ; but full also of great poetry and ripe wisdom ; Hermione, Perdita, Paulina, splendid studies of female types ; Leontes a more fatuous Othello ; Autolycus, the prince of ballad-selling rogues.

**The Tempest** : 1611-12 ; acted, 1613 ; folio, 1623 ; referred to by Ben Jonson, in the induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, c. 1614 ; source unknown ; owed something to Sylvester Jourdain's *Discovery of the Bermudas* and to Florio's *Montaigne* ; possibly performed first at the wedding of Princess Elizabeth with the Elector Palatine, 1613 ; combines all the special Shakespearean qualities of poetry, romance, fantasy, humour, wisdom, in a serene and delightful harmony ; Prospero, Gonzalo, Ferdinand and Miranda, Ariel and Caliban, all among his greatest creations ; unlikely that he represents himself in Prospero, or sets forth a philosophy of life.

**Henry VIII** : acted, 1613 ; folio, 1623 ; from Holinshed and Hall ; not all by Shakespeare ; in collaboration probably with Fletcher ; rather a splendid pageant than a unified drama.

## (e) Doubtful Plays

**Pericles** : ? 1608 ; quarto, 1608 ; not in the first folio ; included in the second edition of the third folio, 1664 ; the story, Apollonius of Tyre, taken from Gower's *Confessio Amantis* ; Shakespeare's hand traceable in the shipwreck, the character of Marina, and *passim* in Acts III-V ; the rest possibly by one George Wilkins, who wrote a novel on the subject, 1608.

**The Two Noble Kinsmen** : ? 1613 ; printed, 1634 ; authorship ascribed to Shakespeare and Fletcher ; the story of Palamon and Arcite from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* ; a play with some workmanlike scenes and strong poetry ; but the humour un-Shakespearean.

**Arden of Feversham** : printed, 1592 ; a sordid drama of Kyd's school ; has a certain grim power, but no grace or refinement ; no evidence that it is Shakespeare's.

**Edward III** : printed, 1596 ; a few strong passages alone justify the ascription to Shakespeare ; as a whole, the work of an inferior imitator of Marlowe.

**The Merry Devil of Edmonton** : printed, 1608 ; a bright and witty little comedy ; might be by the author of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* ; but there is no evidence of it.

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Purely apocryphal are *Mucedorus*, 1598; *Faire Em*, acted before 1592; *The Tragedy of Loocrine*, printed as by W. S., 1590; the chronicle-history of *Thomas, Lord Cromwell*, 1602—also by W. S.; and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1608: the last three, and three others appearing in the third folio (2nd ed.), 1664.

## IV. POEMS

Apart from his plays, Shakespeare equal to the best, except Spenser, as a pure poet; the numerous songs in his plays masterpieces of felicitous lyric; his sonnets surpass any other collection; in these, as in his classical romances, he followed the prevailing fashion with success.

**Venus and Adonis**: 1593; dedicated to the Earl of Southampton as the "first heire of my invention"; in six-lined stanzas, *ababcc*; prolix, artificial, over-luscious.

**Lucrece**: 1594; also dedicated to Southampton; in seven-lined stanzas, *ababbcc*; has the faults of the style followed; with some dignity of reflexion and description added to the sensuous prolixity of the verse.

**Sonnets**: a fairly connected sequence of 126 sonnets, dealing with a friendship, followed by 28 more, apparently written for a "dark lady"; composed, c. 1593-6; circulated among his friends; favourably noticed by Meres as "sugred sonnets," 1598; printed piratically with a dedication to their "onlie begetter," Mr. W. H., 1609; much discussion about the autobiographical element in them; possibly a substratum of truth overlaid by the necessities of conventional treatment; many of them very fine poems; but few, if any, escape the fashionable mannerisms of the contemporary sonnet; only they were written by a greater poet than the other sequences.

**The Passionate Pilgrim**: 1599; a miscellany, was printed under his name; but contains very little of his work. So, *A Lover's Complaint*, added to the sonnets, 1609, is probably not his.

## V. CHARACTERISTICS

(a) **Personal**: Early recognized as a man of honour and civil demeanour; of a gay and genial disposition; "honest, and of an open and free nature" (Ben Jonson); of "copious industry" (Webster); a sane man of the world; won wealth and fame, and valued both; enjoyed the patronage of men of station like Southampton;

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political and religious views probably conventional ; had no sympathy with rebellion or Puritanism ; always ready to appeal to the popular taste ; an "actor-manager" who wrote plays for the stage in a business-like spirit ; hence intrusive comic scenes, hurried and imperfect plots, excess of rhetoric ; essentially a human poet.

(b) **Literary** : In spite of defects, the greatest dramatist of all time ; by reason of his all-embracing human interest and his exceptional poetic powers ; everything subordinate in his plays to the human interest ; united imaginative insight and intellectual power in unique degree ; inexhaustible variety ; fertile invention ; exquisite fancy ; humour ; irony ; passion ; equal to any and every situation ; a master of incisive and suggestive phrase ; perfect fusion of the idea and its expression ; the flower of the Renaissance in England—uniting its freedom, its humanity, its learning ; despising rigid rules of construction or style, was nevertheless a true artist ; sacrificing mechanical unities for the higher unity of the spirit.

## C. After Shakespeare

Great inferiority of Shakespeare's successors ; many capable of writing impressive scenes and devising dramatic situations ; few good plots ; few memorable characters ; many coarse and many bombastic scenes ; general tone indicative of decline in tone and taste under James I ; often clever, but flashy ; superficial and spectacular ; the best work of Jonson and Webster alone exempt from these criticisms.

**Ben Jonson** (1573-1637) : son of a minister whose widow married a bricklayer, 1575 ; educated at Westminster ; was for a time a bricklayer and a soldier in Holland ; somehow acquired a deep classical knowledge ; became connected with the theatre, c. 1595-7 ; *Every Man in his Humour* produced at the Globe Theatre, 1598—traditionally by the influence of Shakespeare ; satirized Marston and Dekker in *Cynthia's Revels*, 1601, and *The Poetaster*, 1602 ; produced his first masque at Court, 1605 ; Poet Laureate, 1616 ;

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published his works in folio, 1616 ; visited Drummond of Hawthornden, 1618 ; in favour with James I, but not with Charles I ; his last play, *A Tale of a Tub*, acted 1634 ; his reputation as man of letters high ; reigned as a king among rising poets like Herrick ; died, 1637, and buried at Westminster Abbey with the epitaph "O rare Ben Jonson" ; a man of uncompromising and quarrelsome temper ; yet a true literary artist, taking a lofty view of his calling ; used the drama as a vehicle for social satire ; in his comedies exposed and lashed vice in all its forms ; paid careful attention to construction and to probability ; had great learning, moral force, irony, wit, but little humour ; his best characters—Babadil, Volpone, Subtle, Sir Epicure Mammon—stand out powerful and vivid ; most lack the wholeness, the blending of light and shade that only Shakespeare could give ; his plays full of intellectual power, sound thinking and common sense ; the later ones condescend to the coarseness demanded by the time.

His best comedies are *Every Man in his Humour*, 1598—a pleasant comedy of manners, full of wit and cleverness, with one memorable character ; *Volpone*, 1605—a terrible study of misanthropy, of great intellectual force ; *Epicene*, 1609—the laughable comedy of the 'silent woman' who plays a diverting trick on Morose ; *The Alchemist*, 1610—a splendidly-constructed play, rather hard, exposing the various aspects of human greed ; *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614—a popular play, with an exuberance of virile and often coarse vitality. The two tragedies—*Sejanus*, 1603, and *Catiline*, 1611—with all their dignity and art are tame and lifeless after Shakespeare's Roman plays. The masques are numerous, and are the best we have before *Comus* : e.g. *The Masque of Queens*, 1609 and *Oberon*, 1611 ; *The Sad Shepherd*, 1631, is a beautiful fragment of a poetic pastoral play. His collections of poems—*Epigrams*, 1616 ; *The Forest*, 1616 ; *Underwoods*, 1640—contain lyrics of some skill and careful workmanship, but only rarely inspired.

Other plays are :—*Every Man out of his Humour*, printed 1600 ; *Cynthia's Revels*, 1601 ; *The Poetaster*, 1602 ; *The Devil is an Ass*, 1631 ; *The Staple of News*, 1631 ; *The New Inn*, 1631 ; and *Eastward Ho*, 1605 (in conjunction with Marston and Chapman).

A volume of prose entitled *Discoveries*, was issued 1641 ; consists of notes on various subjects, written at different

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times; though mainly based on classical originals they reveal his clear critical faculty and a strong and concise prose style.

**Beaumont and Fletcher:** Francis Beaumont (? 1585–1616) : son of a judge ; educated at Oxford ; was trained for the law, but turned to the drama. John Fletcher (1579–1625) : a Cambridge man of whom little is known ; joined Beaumont, c. 1607, thus forming the most remarkable of literary partnerships ; a fluent and easy writer, of lax morality ; did his best work in collaboration ; Beaumont apparently of a deeper and more serious turn of mind, inclining to sentiment, with a real feeling for tragedy.

The best plays of the partnership are *Philaster*, 1609—a romance with some fine poetic speeches, but an improbable plot and little sense of character ; *The Maid's Tragedy*, 1610—with one notable character, Evadne, but some impossible situations ; *A King and No King*, 1611—with the character of Bessus ; *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ? 1613—a bright, farcical comedy, a caricature of *Don Quixote* ; and *The Scornful Lady*, ? 1614.

Fletcher alone wrote *The Faithful Shepherdess*, 1610—a pretty pastoral play ; *The Humorous Lieutenant*, 1619—an amusing comedy ; *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, 1624—also entertaining ; *The Loyal Subject*, 1618—a characteristic romantic drama ; *Bonduca* and *Valentinian*, in or before 1614—highly-flavoured tragedies. These show his characteristic faults and merits : rapid and careless, but often sweet verse ; superficial thought ; carelessness in plot ; excessive and ineffective characterization. He also collaborated with Massinger in *The False One*, 1620 ; and in the effective comedy, *The Spanish Curate*, 1622, and in other plays ; had a hand in about fifty plays.

**Thomas Dekker** (c. 1570–c. 1640) : a general literary man of whom little is known ; was well acquainted with the life of London, especially its seamy side ; often in prison for debt ; amid his poverty always managed to see the cheerful and the humorous ; in his best work shows simple pathos, love of fun, lyrical charm : his tenderness apparent in delineations of women. Of his plays the best are—*The Shoemaker's Holiday*, printed 1600—a boisterous comedy of London life ; *Old Fortunatus*, 1600—a kind of morality, suggestive of Marlowe's *Faustus* ; *The Honest Whore*, 2 parts, 1604, 1630 ; *The Virgin Martyr* (in collaboration with Massinger), 1622. *Satiromastix*, 1602, is his ineffective reply to Jonson's *Poetaster*. His prose work is chiefly genial satire of

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contemporary London: e.g. *The Belman of London*, 1608; *The Guls Hornboke*, 1609.

**Thomas Middleton** (1570–1627): unlike Dekker, a man who obtained a good position in life; like him in his knowledge of London; a popular dramatist, without poetic power or delicacy of feeling, but with a strong dramatic gift for vigorous scenes; his best play, *The Changeling*? 1621—a tragedy of real force, a ruthless picture of unlovely passion; *Women beware Women* is equally distinguished for strong situations and spoilt by its coarse, low, comic scenes; *A Trick to Catch the Old One* and *A Mad World my Masters* are rough but vigorous comedies; *A Game at Chess*, a satire on contemporary politics, was inhibited, 1624, but restored, and very popular. Middleton has plenty of bustle and go; was an unflinching realist; sometimes attains dignity, but never a lofty tone.

**William Rowley** (? 1585–? 1642): an actor who helped Middleton and others; wrote nothing of value by himself; had a gift of humour, with which he disfigured *The Changeling* and other plays.

**John Day** (1574–c. 1640): another industrious collaborator, seems to have had a light touch in comedy; supposed by Prof. Gollancz to be part author of *The Return from Parnassus*, 1602: a witty play, abounding in references to contemporary writers, including Shakespeare; the third part of a trilogy dealing satirically with the quarrels of the playwrights.

**John Marston** (? 1576–1634): a violent satirist; wrote a number of vigorous plays, disfigured by violence and improbability; *Antonio and Mellida*, 1602—an ambitious tragedy; *The Malcontent*, 1604—a comedy, with attractive passages; collaborated with Jonson and Chapman in *Eastward Ho*, 1605; but had been satirized by Jonson in *The Poetaster*, 1602, for his crudities of diction.

**Thomas Heywood** (? 1575–1650): a voluminous playwright, had a hand in 220 dramas; less than 30 have survived; had great industry, wide range and diversity, but was never a great dramatist; most successful in the domestic tragedy, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, 1607, whose pathos and simple truthfulness of tone atone for an improbable plot; among other plays of his are *Edward IV*, a poor historical play; *The Four Prentices of London*, burlesqued by Beaumont and Fletcher in the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*; and *The Fair Maid of the West*. Described by Lamb as a “prose Shakespeare”—true as regards the prose.

**George Chapman** (1559–1634) (p. 77): shows more dignity of style and much learning, but had not the dramatic instinct; good speeches do not atone for ineffective characterization and impossible situations; his best comedies—*All Fools*, printed 1605, still readable, and *Monsieur d’Olive*, 1606; his tragedies—*Bussy d’Ambois*, 1607; *The Conspiracy of Byron*, and *The*

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*Tragedy of Byron*, 1608 ; *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, 1613—show much knowledge of contemporary French affairs and display most effectively his “full and heightened style.”

**Cyril Tourneur** (? 1575–1626) : has left two plays : *The Atheist's Tragedy*, printed 1611, but written earlier under the influence of Shakespeare ; *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1607, a lurid drama of hate, lust, vengeance and murder, gloomy as Webster, yet intense, powerful and often poetic.

**John Webster** (c. 1580–c. 1625) : a dramatist highly praised by critics from Lamb to Swinburne ; nothing known of his life ; collaborated with Dekker and others ; his own genius seen in *The White Devil*, 1607–8, and *The Duchess of Malfi*, 1616 ; *The Devil's Law Case* and *Appius and Virginia* inferior and negligible. His greatness lies in his realization of scenes of tragic horror and gloom ; a pessimist who throws no sunlight into the darkness of his characters ; within his limits has had no superior ; but outside his limits are the broad humanity, the convincing wholeness, of Shakespeare's tragic figures ; with his great imaginative power he had no humour.

**The Duchess of Malfi** : a great play—one of our greatest out of Shakespeare ; shows the ruin of a noble woman by an accumulation of villainies ; the development of the tragedy depicted with great power ; the villains—Bosola and the Cardinal—of the psychological type of Iago ; pity and terror of the fourth act ; close versification ; condensed ; sometimes sententious in a grim way.

**The White Devil** : a contrasted study with the Duchess of Malfi ; Vittoria conceived in the mould of Lady Macbeth ; again the limits of tragic pathos reached ; the same gripping chain of horror and gloom obtained ; occasional flashes of poetry only serve to make the darkness more visible.

**Philip Massinger** (1584–1639) : son of a “servant” of the Earl of Pembroke ; was at Oxford, 1602–6 ; was converted to Roman Catholicism ; came to London, and lived precariously as a dramatist ; helped other dramatists (Fletcher, Dekker, Webster ?) ; his first play acted at Court, 1621 ; continued to produce plays actively till his death ; not entirely decadent, but shows the signs of it ; his verse without distinction or

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poetic quality ; hardly distinguishable from prose ; a good rhetorician ; constructed his plots well, but had little power of individual characterization, no humour, no fire, no passion ; had strong religious feeling and moral earnestness ; dignified, manly, and on the side of the angels ; reflects the Court of Charles I ; grave, interesting, honest, but not a master.

His chief plays are : *The Virgin Martyr* (with Dekker), printed, 1622—a confused tragedy, not wholly unworthy ; *The Unnatural Combat*, ? 1622, a romantic tragedy ; *The Duke of Milan*, 1623—an effective play, reminiscent of *Othello* ; *The Bondman*, 1623—a play on the liberation of Syracuse ; *The Renegade*, 1624 ; *The Roman Actor*, 1626, an impressive defence of the dignity of the stage ; *The Great Duke of Florence*, 1627, a wholly delightful tragicomedy ; *The Maid of Honour*, ? 1627 ; *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, 1633—his most powerful play, a study of miserly greed in the character of Sir Giles Overreach, a really great creation ; *A City Madam*, 1634 ; *The Bashful Lover*, 1636.

**John Ford** (1586–c. 1640) : son of a Devonshire gentleman ; was entered at the Middle Temple, 1602 ; wrote poems and pamphlets of no great merit ; collaborated in writing plays—notably with Dekker and Rowley in *The Witch of Edmonton*, c. 1622 ; his own plays written, c. 1613–40 ; is lost to sight after 1639. His plays show the same faults as those of Fletcher, Massinger, etc. : excessive striving after effect ; unnatural scenes and plots ; high-pitched characters ; but he was a poet capable of sweet and smooth verse ; strong where Massinger was not—in pathos, tenderness and passion ; also in subtle power of psychological analysis—especially of women ; not a master of stagecraft ; but essentially a dramatist of the heart.

His chief plays are :—*The Lover's Melancholy*, printed 1629 ; *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, 1633—revealing his gifts of tenderness, sympathy, sincerity, at their best ; a tragedy of love, finely grasped ; *The Broken Heart*, 1633—sad also, the pathos overdone, but containing two finely-drawn women in Calantha and Panthea ; *Love's Sacrifice*, 1633 ; *Perkin Warbeck*, 1634—a successful history-play ; with two poor comedies. Mention should be made of his occasional success as a lyric poet.

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**James Shirley** (1596–1666): educated at Merchant Taylors' and Oxford; later at Cambridge he produced his first poem; became a Roman Catholic, and a schoolmaster at St. Albans; was successful in his first drama, *Love Tricks*, 1625; came to London, and was one of the favourite dramatists of Court and people; fought on the royalist side at Marston Moor, 1644; went into exile in France; returned, but wrote no more plays; died of exposure during the Great Fire, 1666. A scholar and poet of good lyric power; wrote easy and correct verse, never falling very low nor rising very high in drama; his work more natural and even than Ford's, without his moments of genius; was inspired by most of his predecessors; not really decadent in tone; in spite of his lack of the highest gifts, not unworthy to close the great period of our drama. Among his many plays are:—*The Witty Fair One*, acted 1628—a graceful comedy; *The Traitor*, 1631—a good tragedy; *Hyde Park*, 1632—a lively comedy of London life; *The Lady of Pleasure*, 1633; *The Young Admiral*, 1633; *The Cardinal*, 1641. A number of masques must be set to his credit, often poetic and beautiful, e.g. *The Triumph of Peace*, 1634—performed at Court; *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*, containing the magnificent lyric, “The glories of our blood and state.”

Minor Playwrights of some skill in imitation were **Thomas Randolph** (1605–35), author of the *Muses' Looking Glass*, a comedy in the style of a morality; **Richard Brome** (?–1652), follower of Jonson and Fletcher, author of 15 plays, e.g. *The Jovial Crew*; and **Sir William Davenant** (1606–69), who began his dramatic career with *Albion*, 1629; composed the first English opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*, 1656; and wrote plays after the Restoration, thus linking the Elizabethan with the Restoration school; a pale wraith of the great period; best remembered by his long narrative poem in elegiac quatrains, *Gondibert*, 1651.

## CHAPTER VII

### CAVALIER AND PURITAN

#### A. General Characteristics

(a) No unifying motive to the literature of the period, 1625-60; it witnessed the decay of the Elizabethan impulse; no impulse of equal power impelled the nation; Puritanism the one vital force, unfavourable to literature as such; the nation too much occupied with its serious political and religious problems; Milton, the one great name, an isolated figure ~~wrote~~ with the Greek with the Hebrew spirit; other writers occasional, but also isolated: reflecting their own but no national idiosyncrasies; no new and lasting direction given to our literature till after the Restoration.

(b) **Foreign Literature:** Spanish literature reached its climacteric in this period: Cervantes had died, 1616; but the great school of Spanish dramatists flourished with Lope De Vega, and Calderon (1600-81) for their men of genius; its influence passed to the precursors of Corneille in France and to Dryden and other dramatists in England; Gongora (1561-1627), along with the Italian Marini (1569-1625), gave the classic examples of the artificial "witty" school of poetry, seen in Donne, Crashaw, Cowley, and others; in France, Malherbe (1556-1628) set the example of correct versification followed in England by Waller; Pascal (1623-62) in the *Pensées* gave a book to the world, and crushed the Jesuits in his *Lettres Provinciales*: while Descartes (1596-1650) in his *Discours de la Methode* gave a new impulse to philosophy; the *Divine Semaine* of Du Bartas (1544-90) had popularity in England through a translation made by Joshua Sylvester, 1605, which possibly influenced Milton.

#### B. Poetry

##### I. THE CAROLINE LYRISTS

Men of varied gifts; learned much from Ben Jonson, but more from Donne; all were uneven: occasionally writing perfect verse, but too often under the sway of far-fetched conceits; fall into three groups: (i) the "school of Ben"—Suckling, Lovelace, Carew; (ii) the religious poets—Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, Quarles, Traherne; (iii) those who, like Herrick, combined a love of nature and joy in life with a deep religious feeling. All were cavaliers.

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**Sir John Suckling** (1609-42) : a typical royalist ; courtier, soldier, and favourite of fortune ; fought in the Thirty Years' War ; spent a fortune in London ; travelled in France and Spain ; was imprisoned by the Inquisition ; committed suicide in Paris, 1642 ; wrote four very poor plays, including *Aglaura*, 1638 ; published a *Ballad upon a Wedding*, 1640—a gay and delightful poem ; his other works collected in *Fragmenta Aurea*, 1648 ; contain a few imperishable lyrics, light, easy and careless trifles, but perfect in their natural grace ; did not take poetry seriously, and is remembered in spite of himself.

**Richard Lovelace** (1618-58) : a royalist gentleman, of irregular life ; presented the Kentish petition to the House of Commons, and was imprisoned, 1642 ; fought in the Civil wars ; fell into dissolute courses and died in abject poverty ; wrote some dramas (lost) ; published *Lucasta*, 1649 ; other poems published, 1659 ; wrote carelessly and without art ; only remembered for his two perfect lyrics, "On going to the Wars," and "To Althaea, from Prison."

**Thomas Carew** (? 1589-1639) : an Oxford man ; served abroad with the English ambassador at Venice ; became sewer in ordinary to Charles I ; enjoyed the friendship of Ben Jonson and Davenant ; wrote a masque, *Cælum Britannicum*, 1634 ; *The Rapture*, and lyric poems, published, 1640 ; was a careful stylist ; his lyrics perfect in form, models of lucid and felicitous expression ; "Disdain Returned," "The Cruel Mistress" and "Ask me no more," excellent examples of his gift ; pagan in sentiment, a lover of women and wine, he never exalts his emotions or ours.

**George Herbert** (1593-1632) : son of Sir Richard Herbert and younger brother of Lord Herbert of Cherbury ; educated at Westminster and Cambridge ; fellow of Trinity, 1616 ; Public Orator, 1621-7 ; rector of Bemerton, Wilts, 1630-2 ; wrote Latin and Greek verse, and a prose work, *The Priest in the Temple* ; his English poems published as *The Temple*, 1633 ; the poet of the Laudian movement ; represents its zeal and piety, its ascetic spirit, allied to a personal simplicity and meditative humanity ; his poems written under the influence of Donne ; sometimes too elaborate in imagery ; quaint in fancy and simile ; yet soothing, graceful and lyrical ; among our best religious verse.

**Richard Crashaw** (? 1612-50) : fellow of Peterhouse, 1637 ; expelled by the Puritans, 1644 ; became a Roman Catholic, and fled abroad ; after some years of poverty he became canon of Loreto and died there ; published *Steps to the Temple*, 1646—contained also profane poems, called *Delights of the Muses* ; a very unequal poet ; sometimes absurd in the extravagance of his conceits ; in his moments of religious inspiration is unequalled for his intense expression of ecstatic devotion : as in *The Flaming Heart* and the *Hymn to St. Theresa*.

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**Henry Vaughan** (1622-95): called 'the Silurist' from his birthplace in South Wales; began with love-poems of no special merit; awakened to the sense of religion, published *Silex Scintillans* in two parts, 1650, 1656; a very unequal poet; at his best superior to his fellow religious poets; but too often flat and frigid; was influenced by Herbert, but is more vague and more spiritual; had a delicate feeling for nature; *The Retreat, The World*, "They are all gone into the world of light," are really great poems.

**Thomas Traherne** (1636-74): son of a Hereford shoemaker; took his degree at Oxford, 1656; was vicar of Credenhill, Herefordshire, and afterwards in London as chaplain to the Keeper of the Great Seal; his writings lost till 1896; then ascribed by Grosart to Vaughan; *Poems* printed in 1903; and his *Centuries of Meditations*, in prose, 1908; his poetry akin to Vaughan's, especially in its celebration of the 'wisdom of childhood'; a typical seventeenth-century mystic.

**William Habington** (1605-54): a Worcester man; perhaps a Roman Catholic, but not out of harmony with Puritanism; wrote *Castara*, 1634—a collection of poems in praise of his mistress, Lucy, daughter of Lord Powis; contains a number of pleasant poems, some devotional; with him love is essentially a religious passion.

**Francis Quarles** (1592-1644): a royalist who suffered for his loyalty to the cause, by the confiscation of his property; was a voluminous writer, mainly on religious themes; popular in his day; paraphrased in verse portions of the Bible; published *Emblems Divine and Moral*, 1635—a series of poems on texts of scripture; quaint and agreeable, but not great; serious and pious, but never rising to the sublime.

**Robert Herrick** (? 1594-1674): the best poet of the group round Ben Jonson; was born in London; went to Cambridge, 1613; returned to London, 1620; took orders, and was given by Charles I the living of Dean Prior, Devon, 1629; expelled by the Parliament, 1647; returned, 1660, and died there, 1674; published his poems as *Hesperides* (secular) and *Noble Numbers* (sacred), 1648; wrote a great many lyrics—on love, nature, country life, etc.; some of a pure and delicate beauty hardly to be matched elsewhere; some, especially the epigrams, frank to uncleanness; the work of a skilled craftsman with a strong zest for life; a hedonist and a pagan, in spite of his cloth; lacking in strong passion, but sensitively alive to the externally beautiful;

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deepest and truest in his music, when he sings of the evanescence of life and beauty, as in "Fair Daffodils" and "Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may"; charming in such spontaneous outbursts as *Corinna's Maying*; yet sometimes the evidence of a perfect artistry too noticeable; the religious poems not profound but sincere; the *Litany* and the *Thanksgiving* among the best examples of simple piety in the period.

## II. JOHN MILTON (1608-74)

(a) **Life:** Born in Bread Street, Cheapside; the son of a scrivener; educated at St. Paul's School and Christ's College, Cambridge; destined for the Church, but did not take orders, on account of his early leanings towards Puritanism and his ambition to become a poet; lived in quiet retirement at Horton, Bucks, 1632-8, devoting himself to study and poetry; visited Italy, 1638-9, where he saw Galileo; settled in Aldersgate as the tutor of two nephews, 1639; began his part in political matters with a pamphlet on church discipline, 1641; married Mary Powell, the daughter of a royalist, 1643; wrote on education, divorce, freedom of the Press, 1643-5; his religious views inclined more and more to those of the Independents; supported the King's execution; became Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth, 1649; wrote much prose in political controversy, 1650-2; became blind, 1652; married Elizabeth Woodcock, 1656, (died 1658); during the interregnum wrote his "Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth," 1660; at the Restoration, forced to go into hiding; *Eikonoklastes* and other pamphlets burned; was pardoned, but lived the rest of his life in obscurity and poverty; composed *Paradise Lost*, 1658-65; married Elizabeth Minshull, 1664; lived at Chalfont St. Giles, 1665-7; and at Bunhill Fields, 1667-74; published *Paradise Regained*, 1670; occupied himself with writings on history, religion, toleration, a book of Latin exercises and a Latin lexicon, till he died, 1674; buried at St. Giles, Cripplegate.

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(b) **Personal** : At first a handsome and genial man ; the poet and scholar predominated, but the Puritan was already strong in the background ; the influence of Ben Jonson and Donne slight, that of Spenser and the classics very strong ; during the Horton days became acquainted with Italian ; one of the most learned men of his day ; as his religious views developed, became harsher and more severe ; was apparently a difficult man to live with ; a bitter controversialist, he could be as scurrilous as the basest ; yet was animated by a lofty love of liberty, an austere piety, a noble devotion to a high ideal of duty.

(c) **Relations with Contemporaries** : From 1640 to 1660, he played an important part on the parliamentary side, revealed in his prose pamphlets ; in 1641 he attacked the bishops in the discussion started by Bishop Hall's *Humble Remonstrance* ; he supported Cromwell in 1649 with *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* ; in 1650 he wrote *Eikonoklastes*, the official reply to *Eikon Basilius* ; in 1651 he issued his Latin *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* in reply to Salmasius, a famous Dutch scholar who had defended Charles I ; in 1655 he supported Cromwell's attitude to the Piedmont massacres in a fine sonnet ; sonnets to Cromwell, Fairfax, and Vane show his admiration for those men ; he wrote much and vainly in 1659-60 to forestall the Restoration.

(d) **Works** : Fall into three periods : (i) 1629-39—*Hymn on the Nativity*, 1629 ; *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, ? 1632 ; *Arcades*, 1634 ; *Comus*, 1634 ; *Lycidas*, 1637 ; some sonnets in English and Italian ; some Latin verse, including *Epitaphium Damonis*, 1639—a fine elegy on his lifelong friend, Charles Diodati ; (ii) 1640-60—Prose works, including a *Tractate on Education*, 1643 ; *Areopagitica*, 1644 ; *Eikonoklastes*, 1650 ; a few sonnets, etc. ; (iii) *Paradise Lost*, published 1667 ; *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, 1670. The second edition of *Paradise Lost*, with his preface, appeared in 1674.

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(i) **Hymn on the Nativity**: the best of his juvenile works ; a stately ode, showing some influence of Donne ; but with a stately and sonorous music of its own.

**L'Allegro**: represents the lighter aspect of the poet's mind ; has nothing in common with the reckless gaiety of the typical Cavalier ; reveals a pure delight in the sights, sounds, and rustic events of the country, and the pleasures of literature and great drama ; a perfect harmony of poetry, feeling and thought.

**Il Penseroso** : [represents him in his more serious mood ; yet not morosely Puritanic ; his delight is in the midnight study of high philosophy, in the solemn solitude of the " studious cloister " ; it is a parallel study to *L'Allegro*—complementary rather than contrasted ; equally rich in felicities of expression and melody ; unsurpassed models of poetic art in its truest sense.

**Arcades** : a slight masque, presented to the Countess of Derby.

**Comus** : the libretto to music written by Henry Lawes ; performed at Ludlow Castle on the entrance of the Earl of Bridgwater as Lord of the Welsh border ; the plot based upon Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*, with suggestions from the *Odyssey*, from Jonson, and Fletcher ; a magnificent poem ; not dramatic but intensely personal ; tells the story of the adventures of two brothers in search of their sister in a wood, enchanted by Comus and his revel rout ; guided by an attendant spirit, they find her—saved by her purity ; the poem a protest against the sensuality of the time—no less against the extreme Puritan dislike of the drama shown in Prynne's *Histriomastix* : in spite of its severe moral tone, it is everywhere beautiful poetry ; its theme succinctly expressed at the close—" Love Virtue, she alone is free."

**Lycidas** : a pastoral elegy, written in memory of a fellow-student at Cambridge ; has all the conventions of the pastorals of Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser ; an incongruous mixture of classical imagery and Christian belief ; yet wholly satisfying and appropriate ; King not an intimate friend, but his death a pretext for a noble expression of the poet's thoughts on true fame ; and for a passionate attack on recreant clergy ; rich also in the jewellery of poetry *per se*.

**Sonnets** : " Soul-animating strains, alas too few ! "—written at various times ; reverted to the strict Petrarchan model, *abbaubba*, with three interlacing rimes for the final sestette ; 23 in number ; I To The Nightingale, ? 1630 ; II On Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-Three, 1631 ; III-VII in Italian ; VIII When the Assault was Intended to the City, 1642 ; IX To a Lady, 1644 ; X To Lady

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Margaret Ley, 1644; XI, XII On his Divorce pamphlets, c. 1646; XIII To Lawes, 1645; XIV To Mrs. Catherine Thomson, 1646; XV To Fairfax, 1648; XVI To Cromwell, 1652; XVII To Sir H. Vane, 1652; XVIII On the Late Massacre in Piedmont, 1655; XIX On his Blindness, c. 1652-5; XX To Mr. Lawrence, ? 1656; XXI, XXII To Cyriack Skinner, c. 1655-6; XXIII To the Memory of his Second Wife, 1658.

(ii) **Prose Writings.** Milton's prose often formless and involved, incoherent and ill-constructed; but liable to outbursts of great splendour and eloquence; reveals a fiery and rugged temper, a passionate partisan stooping often to scurrilous abuse of opponents, but also an instinct for righteousness and a love of genuine liberty which ought to save his best passages.

**Areopagitica**: as prose the best of the group; can be read with interest and profit still; an eloquent plea for freedom of the Press and for unlicensed printing; inspiring and sincere.

**Tractate on Education**: a small pamphlet expounding in admirable temper his ideas on education; stimulating and valuable.

**Pamphlets on Church Government**: less pleasant to read from their violence of style and their bitter controversial spirit; strongly anti-Laudian; e.g. *Reformation touching Church Discipline*, 1641; *Apology for Smectymnuus*, 1642; *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy*, 1642.

**On Divorce**: inspired by his own case, the desertion of his first wife; addressed in serious spirit to Parliament, but had no effect; *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 1643; *Tetrachordon*, 1644; *Colasterion*, 1645.

**On the King's Death**: *Eikonoklastes*, 1650, a vigorous reply to the anonymous *Eikon Basilike*, a defence of the King; and the *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, 1651, in reply to Salmasius: it was his close work on his *Defensio Secunda*, 1652, that cost Milton his eyesight.

(iii) **Paradise Lost**: the fulfilment of his early ambition; a work that posterity will not willingly let die—conceived, 1639; choice of subject long doubtful; King Arthur rejected because not a national hero; the Fall of Man chosen because of its universality; long prepared for; begun, 1658; finally completed, 1665; argument and preface on the versification added, 1668; justifies his use of blank verse; the theme announced—to “justify the ways of God to man.”—Book I, pictures the fallen fiends in Hell; II, Satan's resolve, his journey across Chaos to the Earth; III, his arrival at the Earth, guided by Uriel; IV, his arrival at Eden: Adam and Eve and the garden

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described ; V, Raphael warns Adam of the tempter's presence ; VI, Raphael narrates the fight in Heaven ; and, VII, the story of Creation ; VIII, the life of Adam and Eve in paradise ; IX, the temptation and fall of Eve ; X, Sin and Death come from Hell to Earth : Satan returns ; XI, Michael expels Adam and Eve from Eden ; and XII, foretells the coming of Christ. The poem the work of a Puritan steeped in Hebrew thought, and a scholar of ripe classical lore ; has the sublimity of the great Prophets, the severe form of a Greek tragedy ; an unrivalled grandeur of imagination ; a sense of illimitable vastness consonant with the theme ; obsolete in its theology and its astronomy, is yet one of the mighty achievements of poetry ; maintains almost throughout the stately dignity of the "grand style" ; its verse wonderful in its sonorous harmony ; its elaborate similes ; its mastery of the pause, the period, the musical linking of vowel-sounds ; its variety of rhythm ; its use of effective long words and proper names ; remains always on the wing ; fails in humour and human interest ; but has invested Satan with attributes of heroic and dæmonic power—a mighty figure ; Milton has put his own personality into the work ; hence its interest subjective, not objective ; lack of colour and picturesqueness—due to his blindness ; with all drawbacks allowed for Books I-IV will remain a monument of the powers of the English language when applied to a great theme.

**Paradise Regained** : composed at the suggestion of his Quaker friend, Ellwood, c. 1668 ; treats of the Temptation and the victory of Christ over Satan, in four books ; not so grand as *Paradise Lost* ; the finest passages in III and IV, on Athens, Rome and the glories of the world ; in his own opinion, shared by Coleridge and Wordsworth, the most perfect of his works.

**Samson Agonistes** : a drama on the model of Greek tragedy ; conducted mainly by narrative, owing to strict observance of the unities ; choral odes, severe and even rugged, play the part of moral critic ; its interest personal, not dramatic ; Samson represents the poet himself, blind and humiliated champion of a fallen cause ; Dalila and Harapha stand for the opponents of Puritanism, temporarily victorious ; some noble passages of passionate verse ; but the whole tone one of bitterness and defeat ; the last outburst of the poet's genius.

(e) **Characteristics** : No poet has more of the qualities usually called poetic : imagination, metrical skill, a sense of beauty, high emotion ; he had no dramatic qualities, no humour ; his love of beauty partially lost

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in his zeal for holiness ; but all later poets are in his debt, especially those who wrote blank verse. A man of austere if not disagreeable personal character, his later poems are entirely serious ; and do not please, if they are admired, as much as *Comus* and *Lycidas*. His fame suffers from his narrowness of view and the obsolescence of many of the questions he deemed vital ; but his works are literature of the loftiest kind ; they include the greatest epic, the greatest masque, the greatest elegy (or nearly so), and two of the greatest pieces of meditative description in the language.

(f) **Appreciations:** If you scruple to give the title of an epic poem to the "Paradise Lost" of Milton, call it, if you choose, a Divine poem ; give it whatever name you please, provided you confess that it is a work as admirable in its kind as the "Iliad."—ADDISON.

Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.—WORDSWORTH.

There are no such vistas and avenues of verse as Milton's. In reading "Paradise Lost" one has a feeling of spaciousness such as no other poet gives. He showed from the first that larger style which was to be his peculiar distinction.—LOWELL.

We shall prefer to read the fashionable novelist of each season as it passes, but we shall choose to be represented at the international congress of world-poets by Shakespeare and Milton ; Shakespeare first, and next Milton.—MARK PATTISON.

## C. Prose Writers

**Sir Thomas Browne** (1605–82) : born in London ; educated at Winchester and Oxford ; studied medicine at Montpellier and Leyden ; settled as a physician at Norwich, 1637 ; became celebrated as a man of great learning ; was knighted by Charles II, 1671. Author of *Religio Medici*, published 1643 ; *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, 1646 ; *The Garden of Cyrus*, 1658 ; *Hydriotaphia*, 1658 ; *Christian Morals*, and *A Letter to a Friend* (posthumous). A writer of singular charm ; pensive humour ; quaint learning ; original and fanciful thought ; meditative piety and tolerant charity ; his style allusive and delightful, abounding in unexpected turns of phrase and fancy, and in passages of eloquent, almost poetic beauty.

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**Religio Medici**: written about 1635; surreptitiously printed, 1642; the confession of faith of a mind at once religious and scientific; distinguished at once for its quiet piety and reverence, for its aloofness from the bitter strife of the times, for the individuality of its style and its thoughts; a book to meditate upon in quiet hours.

**Pseudodoxia Epidemica**: an inquiry into vulgar errors—a collection of the curiosities of the credulous in all ages.

**The Garden of Cyrus**: a mystical treatise on the quincunx, full of quaint learning.

**Hydriotaphia**: or Urn Burial; a fine descant on the various forms of burial; in the author's usual style, adorned by noble passages of solemn meditation.

**Robert Burton** (1577–1640): born in Leicestershire; went to Oxford, and lived there most of his life; called himself 'Democritus Junior'; an observer of life, humorous and cynical; a scholar, of various and quaint reading; wrote one book, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621: an analysis of the causes and treatment of melancholy, and its effects; a wise and eccentric book; the style individual and unexpected; full of recondite allusions and unusual pieces of knowledge—a storehouse of quotations from unusual sources; the product of a rich but solitary mind; very entertaining to any who will enter into his humour.

**Thomas Fuller** (1608–61): an Anglican clergyman who was expelled from his church in the Savoy for his loyalty to the King's cause, 1642; henceforth had a rather precarious existence; wrote copiously on historical and religious themes; always in a simple, sententious style, flavoured with wit and quaint illustrations; a man of much learning, but not pedantic; of sincere piety, but humorous and kindly; an acute but courteous controversialist; a moderating influence; genial and lovable. Author of *The Holy State*, 1642; *Good Thoughts in Bad Times*, 1644; *Good Thoughts in Worse Times*, 1649; *A Pisgah sight of Palestine*, 1650; a *Church History of Britain*, 1655; *Mixt Contemplations in Better Times*, 1660; *The Worthies of England*, 1662—his most representative work: admirable in

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biography, anecdote, description. He was one of the best writers of "characters" at a time when that form of writing was popular.

Character writing received its originating impulse from Casaubon's Latin version of the *Characters* of Theophrastus, 1592; consists in the portraiture of general types; appealed to the love of analysis in the Puritan mind; successfully done by men of observation and wit; good work done by **Sir Thomas Overbury** (1581-1613); and **John Earle** (1601-65), bishop of Salisbury, in *Microcosmographie*, 1628-9. The once popular *Resolves* of **Owen Felltham** (1602-? 78) returns nearer to the manner of Bacon.

**Jeremy Taylor** (1613-67): of humble origin; educated at the Perse School and, as a sizar, at Caius College, Cambridge; first preached at St. Paul's, 1634; attracted the notice of Laud, who made him a fellow of All Souls, 1636; rector of Uppingham and chaplain to the King, 1639; dispossessed by Parliament, 1644; settled at Golden Grove, in South Wales, 1654; went to Ireland, 1658; bishop of Down and Connor, 1660; lived on unpleasant terms with the people, and died unhappy, 1667; the greatest preacher of his time; his writings really splendid oratory; ornate, rhetorical, eloquent; full of imagery and elaborate simile; infused with real piety, a charitable and tolerant spirit. His chief works: *The Liberty of Prophesying*, 1642—a plea for toleration and freedom of thought; *Holy Living*, 1650—a book of Christian conduct; *Holy Dying*, 1651—an eloquent exposition of the uncertainties of life; *Twenty-Eight Sermons*, 1651—in which his eloquence and power of stately thought may be best studied: which justify his character of "the English Chrysostom."

**William Chillingworth** (1602-44): a learned divine; became a Roman Catholic; was won over by Laud; was for some time a latitudinarian, but at last accepted the Anglican articles; was famous for *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, 1637—distinguished by strong logic and a clear style free from bitterness; a superior example of theological controversy.

**John Hales** (1584-1656): was also a tolerant and broad-minded Anglican, of great reputation in his own day for his learning; his sermons were collected after his death as *Golden Remains*.

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**Thomas Hobbes** (1588–1679) : educated at Oxford ; was tutor to the son of the Duke of Devonshire ; knew Bacon and Ben Jonson ; the chief influence on him the scientific movement on the continent ; planned a complete philosophy, and completed it in three parts : *De Cive*, 1647 ; *De Homine*, 1650 ; *De Corpore*, 1655 ; imperfect for lack of fundamental idea ; wrote much in English on various themes ; is remembered by *Leviathan*, 1651—a treatise on the theory of politics ; in a lucid, unadorned prose, sufficient but not attractive ; advocated absolutism in government and full liberty of opinion ; suspected of materialism and atheism ; relied on the doctrine of the essential selfishness of human nature ; his work eclipsed by Locke's, but put into its just place during the last century.

The **Cambridge Platonists**. A school of philosophers opposed to Hobbes in his separation of philosophy and religion ; attempted to show a harmony between Christianity and Plato ; influenced also by the neo-platonists and by Descartes ; chief among them were **Henry More** (1614–87)—a poet too ; the learned and abstruse **Ralph Cudworth** (1617–88) ; and **Benjamin Whicheote** (1610–83).

**Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon** (1609–74) : intended for the Church, he became a lawyer, but was more interested in literature and scholarship ; was one of the cultured circle of Lord Falkland ; like him, opposed the King's claims, and changed sides, 1643, on the religious question ; on the King's defeat, fled to Jersey ; attended Charles II in his exile ; became Chancellor at the Restoration ; was driven from office, 1667 ; and spent the rest of his life in France, completing his History. His one important book, *The History of the Great Rebellion*, begun c. 1646 ; completed, 1667–74 ; not issued till 1702–4 ; a valuable history, remarkably impartial ; not distinguished in style ; often vivid in description ; always powerful in his sketches of character ; e.g. his portrait of Cromwell is a masterly one.

Other histories of the time undistinguished ; and only one biography deserves notice : **Lucy Hutchinson's** memoir of her husband, a colonel in the parliamentary army ; it is a simple and entirely pleasing picture of the best type of Puritan ; first published, 1806.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RESTORATION PERIOD

#### A. General Characteristics

(a) An epoch of new influences, new tastes and new styles ; in poetry, a classical and "correct" style developed ; the heroic couplet became the standard verse form ; French standards of taste prevailed ; drama revived in the form of the heroic play and the comedy of manners ; rant and bombast in the high-flown tragic themes ; wit and licence stronger than humour in the comedy ; neither the grandeur of Corneille nor the humanity of Molière obtained ; general tone of court and society lax ; satire developed ; on the other side to be set the interest in political philosophy, the growth of a solid school of divinity, the development of science : Locke and Newton men of European reputation.

(b) **French Literature** : The age of Louis XIV a brilliant one in literature ; the national French drama established in the tragedies of **Corneille** (1608-84), in heroic plays like *Le Cid*, *Polyeucte*, etc., in rimed verse ; noble in diction and sentiment ; classical in form ; and **Racine** (1639-99) in *Andromaque*, *Phèdre*, etc. **Molière** (1622-73) came nearer to Shakespeare, and is more natural, in his comedies like *Tartufe*, *L'Avare*, *Le Misanthrope* ; our comedy owed much to him, but did not maintain his moral attitude nor his elevated view of human nature ; in wit, observation and satire of real vice he is unrivalled. The fables of **La Fontaine** (1621-93) ; the sermons of **Bossuet** (1627-1704) ; the "Characters" of **La Bruyère** (1645-96) ; the letters of **Madame de Sévigné** (1626-96) ; the Maxims of **La Rochefoucauld** (1613-80) belong to this age ; while **Boileau** (1636-1711) is to be remembered for his criticism and his influence on Pope. A brilliant and flexible prose style, no less than the example of heroic verse, shows that France was again the leader of literary Europe.

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## B. Poetry

### I. MILTON'S LATER CONTEMPORARIES

**Abraham Cowley** (1618-67) : born in London ; educated at Westminster ; at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1637-43 ; expelled from his fellowship, 1644 ; took the royalist side, and did diplomatic service for the Queen in France, 1646-54 ; returned to England, and was half-reconciled to the Puritans, 1654-8 ; took up medicine and became M.D. of Oxford, 1657 ; went back to France, 1658 ; returned, 1660 ; was rewarded for his services with a grant of land, 1663 ; lived at Chertsey till his death, 1667 ; was buried in Westminster Abbey as one of our greatest poets ; wrote *Poetical Blossoms*, 1633—a volume of remarkable precocious poems ; two plays—*Love's Riddle*, 1638, a weak comedy ; and *The Guardian*, 1641—subsequently re-issued and performed with success as *The Cutter of Coleman Street*, 1661 ; *The Mistress*, 1647—a collection of love-poems, cold, clever, in the metaphysical “conceited” style of Donne ; *Davideis*, 1656—an incomplete epic in four books : elaborate and ponderously dignified : possibly influenced Milton ; *Odes*, at various times and of various value : those “to Mr. Hobbes” and “To the Royal Society” favourable examples : introduced the Pindaric ode, and thus set a fashion followed by Dryden and Gray ; a fertile and ingenious poet ; lacking in greatness of mind and imagination ; the chief of the ‘metaphysical school’ ; a failure because of its artificiality ; mistook fanciful and intricate conceits for imagery. He also wrote a few admirable *Essays* in graceful prose ; also some excellent *Letters* to the Earl of Arlington, from France, 1650-3 ; and was identified with the foundation of the Royal Society, 1661.

**Edmund Waller** (1605-87) : another poet of great reputation almost entirely lost ; a man of good family ; educated at Eton and Cambridge ; sat in the first three parliaments of Charles I, 1625-9 ; also in the Long Parliament, 1640 ; joined the King’s cause, 1642 ; was forced to flee to France, 1643 ; returned, 1654, and wrote complimentary verses to Cromwell ;

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

was made Provost of Eton, was again M.P., and attained a great fame as poet and wit. His poems, first issued 1645, consist of love-poems and occasional lyrics ; cold and correct ; lacking in natural grace and sincerity ; few of the poems addressed to Sacharissa (Lady Dorothy Sidney) can be read with real pleasure, except " Go, lovely Rose," and " On a Girdle " ; he was a pioneer of the classical spirit in English verse ; introduced the heroic couplet as the classical English metre ; attended especially to smoothness and perfection of form.

**Sir John Denham** (1615-69) : a royalist who served the King in several ways and suffered in consequence ; in his *Cooper's Hill*, 1642—a pleasant topographical poem in sweet and smooth heroic couplets—he adopted Waller's classical teaching, and was his first disciple ; wrote also a good deal of poor verse ; his last poem, an *Elegy on Cowley*, adds to his reputation.

**John Cleveland** (1613-58) : another royalist, wrote satires, sometimes effective, as *The Rebel Scot*, 1643 ; but often disfigured by extravagant conceits and unnecessary grossness.

**Andrew Marvell** (1621-78) : born at Hull and educated at Cambridge ; travelled abroad, 1642-6 ; became tutor to Lord Fairfax' daughter, 1650 ; and to a ward of Cromwell's, 1653 ; appointed Latin Secretary along with Milton, 1657 ; elected M.P. for Hull, 1659, and sat till his death, 1678 ; a moderate republican and Puritan ; appreciated Charles I as well as Cromwell ; anxious for good government ; accepted the Restoration ; attacked its corrupt administration in vigorous pamphlets, e.g. *The Rehearsal Transprosed*, 1672. As poet, he wrote lyrics akin to those of the Caroline lyrists ; under the influence of Milton more dignified in tone and memorable in thought ; will be remembered by his *Horatian Ode on the Return of Cromwell from Ireland*, 1650 ; *Thoughts in a Garden* ; *A Drop of Dew* ; *The Bermudas* ; and his verses in honour of *Paradise Lost*. His political Satires, written after the Restoration, have sting and force, but are only ephemeral in value. His *Poems* first collected by his widow, 1681.

## II. RESTORATION POETRY

**Samuel Butler** (1612-80) : little known of his life ; a Worcestershire man ; largely self-educated ; in early life clerk or secretary to various gentlemen, in-

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cluding Sir Samuel Luke, a colonel in Cromwell's army, a Bedfordshire magistrate, and probably the original of Hudibras ; was secretary to the Lord Deputy of Wales, 1660-3 ; had a successful literary career, was appreciated by Charles II, but died in poverty in London : "the glory and the scandal of the age" (Oldham). His chief work is *Hudibras* ; Part I, 1662 (probably written earlier) : Part II, 1663 : Part III, 1678 ; a very long burlesque satire on the various sects of Puritans ; in riming octosyllabics, tending to doggerel ; witty, humorous, cutting ; very popular, because topical ; the adventures of Hudibras (a Presbyterian) and Ralphy (Independent) suggested by those of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza ; a caricature but, dealing with unmistakable weaknesses of Puritanism, has survived ; reflects the taste of the time in its irreverent wit and low estimate of human nature ; never rises to lofty thoughts, but contains many familiar lines : e.g. it is here that Butler made the Presbyterians

Compound for sins they are inclined to  
By damning those they have no mind to.

His posthumous works, published 1759, include satirical pieces — e.g. *The Elephant and the Moon*, a satire on natural science ; a series of "characters" in prose ; and detached thoughts ; the work of a keen observer, sceptical and superficial, but too genial to be cynical.

**John Oldham** (1653-83) : a keen and biting satirist, whose *Satires on the Jesuits*, 1681, reflected the frenzy of the Titus Oates episode ; a precursor of Dryden in political satire ; was praised by him for the vigour of his wit ; died too young to ripen his powers fully.

**Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon** (1634-85) : wrote an *Essay on Translated Verse*, 1681, in frigid couplets ; admired Milton and Dryden ; in Pope's words "in all Charles' days" he "only boasts unspotted bays."

**John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester** (1647-80) : a man of dissolute and infamous character ; yet a critic and a wit ; wrote a few lyrics and occasional poems that rightly survive.

**Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset** (1637-1705) : a patron of letters, himself wrote little : a few songs, many of which are good examples of *vers de société*, deserve to live.

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

**Sir Charles Sedley** (1639–1719) : also a patron and student ; wrote plays and poems, but only two or three short songs deserve to be remembered.

## C. John Dryden (1631–1700)

(a) **Life** : Born at Aldwinkle, Northants, 1631 ; educated at Westminster, and Trinity College, Cambridge ; came to London, 1657 ; became a royalist, 1660 ; married Lady Elizabeth Howard, 1663 ; produced *The Wild Gallant*, his first play, 1663 ; was appointed Poet Laureate, 1670 ; obtained fame as a dramatist ; supported the King's party with his first satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1681 ; obtained the post of collector of customs at London, and an increased pension, 1683 ; became a Roman Catholic, 1686 ; lost position and pension at the Revolution, 1688 ; fell to active literary work for a livelihood—more plays, lyric poems, translations ; died in Soho, and was given a splendid funeral in Westminster Abbey, 1700.

(b) **Characteristics** : At his death the acknowledged head of the literary profession ; a man of sterling personal character ; changed his faith on the accession of James II, but not insincere in this ; his later life a battle against poverty ; few personal traits survive ; those which do are to his honour ; as a writer, followed rather than led the fashion, but surpassed all others in its exercise ; to that extent was a time-server, but is justified by the result ; set the example of the classic couplet for the following age ; the first writer of his time in all departments tried : in satire, lyric, philosophic poetry, drama, literary criticism ; a consummate intellectual poet, lacking the inspired originality, the spontaneous vision, the sublime imagination of the greatest poets.

(c) **Poems** : Stanzas on the Death of Cromwell, 1658 ; *Astræa Redux*, 1660—in honour of Charles II's restoration ; *Annus Mirabilis*, 1666 ; *Absalom and Achitophel*, I, 1681 ; *The Medal*, 1682—a “satire against sedition” ; *MacFlecknoe*, 1682 ; *Absalom and Achitophel*, II,

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1682—only a small part by Dryden, the rest by Nahum Tate (1652–1715); *Religio Laici*, 1682; *Threnodia Augustalis*, 1685; *The Hind and the Panther*, 1687; *Britannia Rediviva*, 1688—on the birth of the Prince of Wales; translations from Horace, Juvenal, etc.; translation of Virgil, 1697; *Fables*, 1699; together with a number of odes, elegies, complimentary addresses, prologues and epilogues to his plays, etc.

**Early Poems**: up to 1666; not lacking in force, but conceits too frequent; *Annus Mirabilis*, dealing with the events of 1666—principally the Dutch War and the Great Fire—has some poetic stanzas, but is rhetorical rather than imaginative.

**Satires**: here he struck his real vein; used the heroic couplet with masterly skill; showed an unexampled power of crushing portraiture—"characters" in verse, but intensely personal; yet his attacks of general, not merely personal importance. *Absalom and Achitophel* represents the King as David, Monmouth as Absalom, and his false counsellor Achitophel is a masterly portrait of Shaftesbury; Zimri (Buckingham), Shimei (Bethel), Corah (Titus Oates), Doeg (Settle), Og (Shadwell) are other examples of this power. *The Medal*, said to have been suggested by the King, is not so powerful; written when the City of London proposed to strike a medal in honour of Shaftesbury's acquittal (1681); *MacFlecknoe*, a brilliant and savage attack on the Whig poet and dramatist, Shadwell; supposed to succeed Flecknoe on the throne of the Dunces; a little masterpiece.

**Religious Poems**: *Religio Laici*, an argument in support of the Protestant Church of England; a difficult theme for verse; managed with dignity and clearness; condemns the "falsehood of extremes" in eloquent and occasionally beautiful passages. *The Hind and the Panther*, a defence of the Roman Catholic Church; again the argument is conducted with lucidity and skill, in spite of the inappropriate machinery; the pictures of the various sects under the guise of animals gives occasion for his skill in "character" drawing; it is less tolerant and not in such fine temper as *Religio Laici*; but unmistakably sincere.

**Odes, etc.**: he wrote with real feeling in the complex lyrical measures; his dramas contain some moderate songs; generally his lyrics not spontaneous, nor inevitable, but careful compositions; of these occasional poems we may mention: the elegy *To the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew*, 1686—a fine poem; the epistle to his kinsman, John Driden, 1699; the elegy *Eleanora*, 1692; *A Song for*

## AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

*St. Cecilia's Day*, 1687; *Alexander's Feast*, written for St. Cecilia's Day, 1697—one of his best poems; also generous compliments in verse to fellow poets and playwrights—e.g. Oldham, Lee, Congreve.

**Translations**: his *Virgil* a good book, retelling the story in vigorous couplets; not exact or scholarly; but extremely readable; renderings of Juvenal, Persius, Horace, Ovid, etc., not to be despised; in the *Fables* he retold some of the tales of Chaucer and Boccaccio, with success; e.g. *Palamon and Arcite*, *The Cock and the Fox*, (Chaucer's); *The Flower and the Leaf* (spurious Chaucer); *Cymon and Iphigenia*, *Theodore and Honoria*, (Boccaccio); not so free or simple as the originals; but show Dryden to have been an admirable story-teller; the excellence of these *Fables* is his.

(d) **Plays**: Nearly 30 in number: fair representatives are *The Indian Emperor*, 1667; *Tyrannic Love*, 1670; *The Mock Astrologer*, 1671; *The Conquest of Granada*, 1672; *Marriage à la Mode*, 1673; *The State of Innocence*, 1674; *Aurengzebe*, 1676; *All for Love*, 1678; *Limberham*, 1678; *The Spanish Friar*, 1681; *Don Sebastian*, 1690; *Amphytrion*, 1690; *King Arthur*, 1691; and *Love Triumphant*, 1694—on the failure of which he gave up the drama for translations.

Dryden began in imitation of Spanish drama of intrigue; did not succeed; then turned to the development of the heroic play in *The Indian Emperor*: owing much to French romances, and later to Corneille. A heroic play, a sort of epic drama: deals with heroic characters and incidents: must therefore be written in the high classical style, i.e. heroic couplets; artifical and high-flown in diction; tending at once to rant, bombast, and bathos; successful on the Restoration stage; lacks dramatic development of character; strong in rhetoric, but weak in true poetry; declamatory and never moving; can be well studied in *The Conquest of Granada* and *Aurengzebe*. *All for Love* in blank verse emulates *Antony and Cleopatra*: a good play, but without Shakespeare's subtle characterization; in comedy, Dryden adopted the licentious and coarse manners of the Court; yet *Marriage à la Mode* is amusing comedy, not merely indecent farce; *Amphytrion* places him in competition with Plautus and Molière, not much to his disadvantage; *The Spanish Friar* and *Don Sebastian* have been highly praised, but are hardly so good as *All for Love*. On the whole Dryden not a natural dramatist; necessity and fashion drove him; he worked hard, and his splendid

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literary powers made him the acknowledged master of the type of play then desired ; but that was not a truly dramatic type.

(e) **Prose** : Consists chiefly of essays and critical prefaces to his poems and plays ; criticisms show much sound sense and sane love of literature ; written in a clear and workmanlike prose ; conventional and superficial, but honest and generally unprejudiced ; his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, 1668, discusses the respective merits of rime and blank verse. He set an example of plain, unadorned, well-balanced prose, suitable for ordinary themes ; thus did much to establish a standard prose style ; in prose as in verse he set the fashion for the coming age, demanding lucidity, form, arrangement ; "in both he is a classic of our prose" (Matthew Arnold) ; plays, poems and criticism, "his merits are his own, his faults those of his age" (Garnett).

## D. Drama

### I. DRAMATIC POETS

**Thomas Otway** (1651-85) : son of the vicar of Woolbeding, Sussex ; educated at Winchester and Oxford ; did not complete his university course ; came to London, 1671, and tried his fortune as an actor unsuccessfully ; became a man about town and formed the loose habits that kept him poor ; wrote his first play — *Alcibiades*, a feeble tragedy, 1675 ; patronized by Rochester ; made a success with *Don Carlos*, 1676 ; translated plays of Racine and Molière ; fell in love (unrequited) with the actress, Mrs. Barry, 1678 ; served as a soldier in Flanders, 1678 ; produced *The Orphan*, 1680 ; *The Soldier's Fortune*, 1681—his only presentable comedy ; *Venice Preserved*, 1682 ; died mysteriously—probably of starvation, certainly in poverty and misery, 1685 ; a true dramatist and poet ; distinguished for his tenderness and tragic passion ; had a good sense of a dramatic situation, and some power of characterization ; one of the "inheritors of unfulfilled renown."

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

**Don Carlos**: deals with a theme treated romantically by Schiller; has many good points; but is spoiled by being in rime.

**The Orphan**: a domestic tragedy in blank verse; contains the character of Monimia, a splended heroine, whose fate produces the feeling of " pity and terror " proper to tragedy.

**Venice Preserved**: the greatest tragedy of the time; a splendid theme, invested with the genuine poetic passion of great tragedy; Jaffier a real tragic figure, strong in love but weak in intellectual power; Belvidera and Pierre nearly as good; even the coarse " comic " scenes hardly impair the moving pathos of this fine play.

**Nathaniel Lee** (1653-92): a man of dissolute life, who became insane and died early from his intemperate habits, was a poet in fitful gleams; *The Rival Queens*, 1677, and *Mithridates*, 1678—his best plays—are strange mixtures of passionate verse and unbridled rant; he was good enough to have Dryden as collaborator in the successful *Œdipus*, 1678, and *The Duke of Guise*, 1682.

A number of minor dramatists wrote in verse; very rarely rising into poetry; e.g. **Thomas Southerne** (1660-1746), a respectable and successful playwright in *The Fatal Marriage*, 1694, and *Oronooko*, 1696; **John Crowne** (1640-? 1703), a prolific caterer for the theatre, who wrote a fair comedy in *Sir Courtly Nice*, 1685, and tragedies of no merit, such as *Darius*, 1688; **Thomas Shadwell** (1640-92), the portly butt of Dryden; a Whig; humorous but obscene; in plays like *Epsom Wells*, 1675, a mirror of his age; **George Villiers**, second Duke of Buckingham (1627-88), the well-known statesman of the Cabal ministry, courtier and wit, the Zimri of Dryden, parodied the latter's heroic plays in *The Rehearsal*, 1672—a lively skit, surpassed in its style only by Sheridan's *Critic*.

## II. COMEDY OF MANNERS

Developed a little later than the heroic play; drew its inspiration from Molière, but could only follow him at a distance; is witty, clever, licentious; reflects the taste of the upper strata of society, especially of the Court circle; has grace, polish, distinction of diction; mainly deals with love intrigues in a cynical spirit, without lofty sentiment or any severe moral canons; of Congreve, Lamb said: "He has entirely excluded from his scenes . . . not only anything like a faultless character, but any pretensions to goodness or good feelings whatever"; this is the impression made by the whole school; they lack Molière's humanity and broader vision.

**Sir George Etheredge** (1634-91): an idle gamester and man of fashion; introduces the new school of comedy;

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imitated Molière in his attempt to picture manners ; his wit light, careless, immoral ; his plays important as pioneer work ; the best—*She Would if She Could*, 1668 ; and *The Man of Mode*, 1676—containing the character of Sir Fopling Flutter (i.e. himself).

**William Wycherley** (1640–1715) : educated in France ; wrote plays only in early life ; was pensioned by James II ; wrote licentious verses in his later life, and enjoyed the homage of Pope ; his best plays—*Love in a Wood*, 1672 ; *The Plain Dealer*, 1675 ; *The Country Wife*, 1677 ; well constructed, witty, but entirely cynical and immoral.

**William Congreve** (1670–1729) : the greatest dramatist of the school ; born in Leeds ; educated at Kilkenny and Trinity College, Dublin ; came to London to study for the Bar, 1691 ; at once obtained literary and social success ; wrote his comedies, 1693–1700 ; enjoyed in later years the homage of men of letters and fashion, and received the dedication of Pope's *Homer*, 1715 ; a true comic dramatist ; genial ; witty ; masterly in dialogue ; characters profligate and cynical, but drawn with real power ; in many ways almost Molière's equal ; “in him all beauties of this age we see” (Dryden).

**Plays** : *The Old Bachelor*, 1693—in imitation of Wycherley ; *The Double-Dealer*, 1693—a carefully worked-out play : a living picture-gallery of society people : all excellent creations, but cynically conceived : lacking in love and seriousness : a blaze of wit : and full of good literary qualities ; *Love for Love*, 1695—probably the best comedy of manners in English ; *The Mourning Bride*, 1697—a very successful but not strong tragedy ; *The Way of the World*, 1700—not a success owing to Collier's attack on the drama ; changing taste possibly prompted him to write no more plays.

**Sir John Vanbrugh** (1664–1726) : served in the army ; then took to writing comedies ; afterwards became an architect, building Blenheim House, etc. ; had a bitter controversy with Collier ; his comedies act well ; are well constructed, witty and diverting ; but have the prevalent moral laxity ; e.g. *The Relapse*, 1696 ; *The Provoked Wife*, 1697 ; *The Confederacy*, 1705.

**George Farquhar** (1678–1707) : an Irishman, gallant, gay, witty ; sold his army commission to pay his debts ; his comedies lively, original, good natured, and not so indecent as some ; excels in the humours of military life ; e.g. *Love and a Bottle*, 1699 ; *The Constant Couple*, 1701 ; *The Recruiting Officer*, 1706 ; *The Beaux Stratagem*, 1708—written on his deathbed

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

**Mrs. Aphra Behn** (1640–89) : a woman of experience and wit ; wrote eighteen lively but often offensive comedies ; a few good lyrics ; and a number of novels, not wholly uninteresting —e.g. *Oronooko* ; *The Fair Jilt*.

**Colley Cibber** (1671–1757) : links this with the next age ; his plays very light and comparatively innocent in tone ; show none of the literary power of his predecessors.

**Attacks on the Drama** : **Thomas Rymer** (1639–1714) : a celebrated antiquary, attacked the romantic drama in the spirit of the French critics, in *Tragedies of the Last Age*, 1673. The lax moral tone of the stage was pilloried by **Jeremy Collier** (1650–1726), a Nonjuring clergyman, in a *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, 1698 ; not lacking in wit and force of argument ; severely Puritan in tone ; accepted as just by Dryden ; ineffectively combated by Congreve and Vanbrugh ; did really useful service.

## E. Prose

### I. RELIGIOUS WRITERS.

**John Bunyan** (1628–88) : born near Bedford ; received some rudiments of education and was early acquainted with the Bible ; adopted his father's trade of "tinker" ; fought in the Civil War, 1644–5 (?) ; married, 1648 ; for many years was involved in spiritual conflict ; joined the Independent congregation at Bedford, 1650 ; became a preacher, 1655 ; wrote his first book, *Some Gospel Truths Opened*, 1656 ; imprisoned under the Act of Uniformity, 1660–72 ; enjoyed a moderate amount of liberty, and published *Grace Abounding*, 1666 ; was released under the Declaration of Indulgence, 1672 ; was again imprisoned, 1675–6 and wrote the first part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, 1676 ; was a popular preacher in London and elsewhere ; was buried in the Nonconformist burial ground, Bunhill Fields. Next to Milton he is the representative Puritan of literature ; sincere in his piety, but an essentially human Christian ; a master of simple English prose—sturdy, direct, homely, like himself ; written with one aim—conviction ; inspired by one book—the Bible ; dominated by the practical needs and difficulties of the religious life. His works include many sermons, tracts and pamphlets besides—*Grace Abounding*,

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1666 ; *Pilgrim's Progress* (Part I, 1678, Part II, 1684) ; *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, 1680 ; *The Holy War*, 1682.

**Pilgrim's Progress** : one of the most popular books ever published in England ; an allegory of the Christian life ; its religious significance never lost sight of ; a vision, rendered real by the writer's personal experiences ; his abstractions become real men and women through the writer's vivid and concrete imagination ; he has made a treatise of severe didactic purpose as delightful as a realistic romance ; its vitality, its human interest, its pictorial power, unite the cultured and unlettered in equal admiration ; its characters survive to-day, though the theology may not.

**The Holy War** : an allegory representing the attack of the powers of evil on Mansoul ; a new treatment of the theme of *Paradise Lost* ; ingenious, lucid, vigorous ; but not so direct as *Pilgrim's Progress* ; written with more conscious art, and less satisfying.

**Grace Abounding** : a faithful transcript of his own religious experiences ; belongs to the same realm as St. Augustine and Thomas à Kempis.

**Life and Death of Mr. Badman** : a life-like picture of a thoroughly bad man ; written with vivid realism ; varied by many interesting digressions on spiritual matters, in naive dialogue between Attentive and Wiseman ; reveals the real Bunyan amid his real experiences.

Other Nonconformist Writers who made a mark were :— George Fox (1624-90), founder of the Quakers, for his *Journal* ; Robert Barclay (1648-90), another Quaker, for his *Apology*, the standard book on his sect ; and Richard Baxter (1615-91), a voluminous writer, in popular and interesting style, as in *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*.

**Anglican Divines.** The period produced many great preachers and theologians, e.g. Isaac Barrow (1630-77), master of Trinity, an eloquent and prolix preacher ; Robert South (1633-1716) ; John Tillotson (1630-94), archbishop of Canterbury, less of an orator than South, but an important personal influence ; and Edward Stillingfleet (1635-99), bishop of Worcester, who defended the Church of England against Locke.

**Natural Theology** produced one notable work, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, by Thomas Burnet (?-1715), master of Charterhouse ; of no value for its science, but having much eloquence and charm of style.

**Izaak Walton** (1593-1683) : may be classed as a religious writer on account of his very delightful bio-

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

graphies of Donne, Herbert, Hooker, and Wotton ; also for the strain of gentle meditative piety in *The Compleat Angler*, 1653. A successful London draper, he retired to a country life ; his famous book reflects his simple tastes and pursuits ; it is the fisherman's classic, dear to all who love the quiet of the country, for its freshness, its good cheer, its companionable garrulity.

## II. MEMOIRS AND HISTORY

**Samuel Pepys** (1633-1703) : a man of humble origin who rose to high position as an Admiralty civil servant ; a man of considerable attainment ; one of the early members of the Royal Society : president, 1684 ; collected a large library, which he bequeathed to Magdalen College, Oxford ; included in it was his *Diary*, in cipher ; first edited by Lord Braybrooke, 1825 ; extends from Jan. 1660 to May, 1669 ; an invaluable picture of the public and private life of the time ; also a complete picture of the diarist himself : naïve, frank, artless, human ; revealing his petty doings and interests, his peccadilloes and his official duties ; the life and character of an ordinary man of the time, not heroic, always natural, with his bourgeois virtues and weaknesses ; in an easy, entertaining style ; a book of confessions intended only for his own ears ; the best diary in literature.

**John Evelyn** (1620-1706) : a country gentleman of scholarly and scientific tastes, also left an interesting *Diary*, first printed, 1818 ; covers nearly seventy years ; even more valuable for public events than Pepys ; but more cautious and sedate in its style, and more studied in his personal attitude ; fleeing from England in 1643, he returned in 1647—to live, an intelligent observer and moderate royalist, peacefully through the changes of his time ; his learned tastes are reflected in *Sylva*, an interesting book on tree-planting.

**Edmund Ludlow** (1617-92) : played an important part in the Civil War ; was one of the King's judges ; a republican—opposed Cromwell's protectorate ; tried to prevent the Restoration, 1658-60 ; lived in Switzerland, 1660-92, where he composed his valuable *Memoirs* ; the work of an eye-witness, extending from 1642 to 1672 ; especially valuable for the events he took part in, 1642-60.

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**Gilbert Burnet** (1643–1715) : a prominent ecclesiastic who became bishop of Salisbury under William III ; wrote a *History of the Reformation*, 1679–1714, one of the best books on the theme and still a standard authority ; also the *History of his Own Times*, 1723–34, an interesting book on events in which the author played an important part ; clearly written, reliable ; almost as personal as a book of memoirs, but valuable as a history also.

**Sir William Temple** (1628–99) : an important diplomatist and statesman ; negotiated the Triple Alliance, 1668 ; attempted to form the Council of Thirty, 1679 ; helped to marry Princess Mary to William of Orange, 1677 ; forced into retirement by the failure of his plans, devoted himself to the life of a dilettante student ; wrote *Memoirs* of his own political life from 1672 to 1680 ; also a number of *Essays* ; in an elegant style, easy, attractive, superficial ; has a reflected glory from the charming love letters of his wife, **Dorothy Osborne**, 1652–4 : first published 1888 ; a cautious time-server and literary amateur, his reputation was high ; he did a good work for English prose.

## III. PHILOSOPHY

**John Locke** (1632–1704) : educated at Westminster and Oxford, where he became a lecturer on Greek and rhetoric ; practised medicine ; became attached to Shaftesbury, and was forced to live in exile, 1683–8 ; was highly valued by William III, but refused to accept important offices ; was on the Commission for reforming the coinage, 1691 ; the most famous and influential philosopher of his time ; insisted that experience was the foundation of all our knowledge and combated the doctrine of innate ideas ; hence gave an impetus to the scientific movement ; wrote in a dry matter-of-fact style, combining sound common sense with severe logical method and distrust of the imaginative faculties. His chief works are : an *Essay on Toleration*, 1689—much in advance of his time ; the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 1690—his masterpiece ; *Thoughts concerning Education*, 1693—a wise and enlightened book which created an epoch in the history of education ; and other works on political and economic matters.

**Science.** The early enthusiasm of the members of the Royal Society is reflected in the lively *History of the Royal Society* by **Thomas Sprat** (1636–1713), bishop of Rochester, a book by no

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means confined to students ; many famous names appear ; but they contributed nothing to literature ; most wrote in Latin, e.g. **Sir Isaac Newton** (1642–1727) in the *Principia*, 1687—one of the most important books of the world ; **Robert Boyle** (1627–91), a great natural philosopher, wrote very moderate English prose on many subjects, scientific and theological : e.g. *The Sceptical Chymist*, 1661, and *The Excellency of Theology compared with Natural Philosophy*, 1673; and **John Ray** (1628–1705), a distinguished naturalist, wrote only fairly well in his theological treatise, *The Wisdom of God in the Creation*.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE AUGUSTAN AGE

#### A. General Characteristics

AN age of prose ; its achievements intellectual rather than imaginative ; its literary ideals practical and matter-of-fact : lucidity in prose and verse ; all loose and inexact expression, all disorder of thought, all surrender of the rein of good sense discouraged ; good form exacted—"What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed" ; the Augustan age of our literature—our "indispensable eighteenth century" ; saw the ripening of the periodical essay, the beginning of the realistic novel in Defoe, the full development of satire ; the art of expression fully mastered in Swift and Pope ; the realms of romance and great lyric closed to them ; no great drama produced.

#### B. The Periodical Essay

The reigns of William III and Anne, with their political battles, provided the environment for the journalist ; the opportunity seized by Defoe, who started his *Review*, 1704, which made the news-sheet a critical medium ; also by Swift in his *Examiner*, 1710 ; the method was extended by Steele to matters of social concern in *The Tatler*, 1709.

**Richard Steele** (1672-1729) : an Irishman, educated at Charterhouse and Oxford ; joined the Life Guards, 1694 ; served under Lord Cutts ; led a gay and roystering life, but became captain and wrote *The Christian Hero*, 1701 ; wrote three sentimental comedies, 1702-5 ; appointed public Gazetteer, 1707 ; commenced *The Tatler*, 1709 ; contributed to *The Spectator*, 1711-12 ; brought out *The Guardian*, 1713-14 ; wrote party pamphlets for the Whigs ; was elected M.P., and knighted ; produced a fourth comedy, *The Conscious Lovers*, 1722 ; lived the life of a man about town,

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generous, impulsive, improvident; always in debt, often in drink, yet a lovable man, "one of Nature's gentlemen."

**The Tatler:** first issued under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff (taken from Swift); proposed to supply for the public the gossip, social and literary, of the coffee-houses; came out three times a week till January, 1711; articles dated from Will's coffee-house (literature and criticism), White's chocolate-house (gallantry, pleasure and entertainment), St. James' (politics), the Grecian (scholarship) and the editor's own apartment; the last excludes the rest after the 100th number; the editor becomes a self-appointed critic and regulator of taste; his moral purpose always present to him; a genial and humorous critic of life; in a style rough and impetuous, in comparison with Addison's; but with a warmer sympathy and more tender pathos; a careless optimist in personal life, he was full of kindly wisdom in the editorial chair. He contributed 236 papers to *The Spectator*.

His comedies—*Grief à la Mode*, 1701; *The Lying Lover*, 1703; *The Tender Husband*, 1705; *The Conscious Lovers*, 1722—have touches of the comic spirit, but are too sentimental; they are an attempt to purify the tone of the theatre, and as such are worthy of mention.

**Joseph Addison** (1672–1719): son of a Wiltshire clergyman; like Steele, educated at Charterhouse and Oxford; attracted the notice of Montague, Somers, and Congreve by his precocious talents; wrote verses on the Peace of Ryswick, 1697; received a pension of £300, 1699; travelled in Italy and France, 1699–1703; became a member of the Kit-Kat Club—a literary-political club of 39 Whigs; wrote *The Campaign*, 1705; on its success became Under-Secretary of State, 1705; produced an unsuccessful opera, *Rosamond*, 1705; enjoyed the friendship of Swift; contributed 42 papers to *The Tatler*, 1709–10; brought out *The Spectator*, 1711–12; produced his tragedy, *Cato*, 1713; quarrelled with Pope, 1714–15; Irish Secretary, 1714; defended Whig policy and George I in *The Freeholder*, 1715; married the Dowager Countess of Warwick, 1716; became Secretary of State in Sunderland's ministry, 1717; resigned, 1718; died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, 1719. A man of high character and

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intellectual attainment ; honoured equally by Steele and Swift ; shy, reserved and cold, probably a little supercilious ; a master of polished and lucid prose—of irony and urbane wit—of polite and cultured manners ; lacked the warmth and keenness of Steele, but surpassed him in grace, elegance and finish ; did much “to establish a rational standard of conduct in morals, manners, art and literature,” and to bring philosophy from the study to the club.

**The Spectator** : succeeded *The Tatler* as a daily ; the spectator the centre of a club, whose members represent all classes of society : Sir Roger de Coverley, Sir Andrew Freeport, Will Honeycomb, Will Wimble, the Clergyman, the Templar ; the Spectator himself the man of taste and common sense ; its successful character-drawing ; its genial humour and wit ; amiable but poignant irony ; effective satire—e.g. of the ladies ; seriousness—e.g. in its allegories, like *The Vision of Mirza* ; charm of its style and simplicity of diction ; a picture of manners unmarred by invective or political bias ; out of 555 papers 274 Addison's.

**His poems** : *The Campaign*, written on the suggestion of Halifax, to celebrate the victory of Blenheim ; won him a great reputation ; its smooth verses lack inspiration. *Cato*, a stately tragedy on the classic model ; also had a political success ; has some fine declamation of high sentiment, but no sense of character. The qualities which made him a successful essayist spoiled his verse ; he entirely lacked the lyric note.

### C. Miscellaneous Prose

**Daniel Defoe** (1661–1731) : born in London ; son of a butcher and Dissenter ; educated for the ministry ; fought with Monmouth, but escaped the consequences, 1685 ; was in business first as hosier, then as brick-maker, but failed ; wrote his *Essay on Projects*, 1697 ; supported William III in pamphlets and with the doggerel verse of *The True Born Englishman*, 1701 ; was put in the pillory and imprisoned for the ironical *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, 1702 ; was released and began his *Review*, 1704 ; led a shifty journalistic life, in the pay of the Whigs, but nominally supporting the Tories ; issued *Robinson Crusoe*, 1719 ; followed by other novels ; exposed by his editor Mist, 1726 ; fell into dis-

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repute, but continued to write ; died mysteriously in a low lodging in Moorfields, 1731. As a man not admirable ; "the greatest liar who ever lived" ; a master of realistic invention ; took a low view of life ; appealed always to the inferior side of human nature ; without ideality or passion ; yet advocated excellent practical measures ; e.g. did much to bring about the union with Scotland, 1707 ; a clear and voluminous writer, who wrote down to the level of an imperfectly educated audience ; his ready facility unequalled ; a journalist of genius.

**Journalistic Work** : chiefly remembered by the *Review of the Affairs of France* (1705-13) : in which he advocated the war, the Union, toleration and innumerable schemes of social improvement ; not hampered by party ties ; changed sides as Whig and Tory came into power ; a marvel of prolific energy ; wholly written by himself. In *Mist's Journal* (1717-24), he carried out his elaborate political spying. *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* is a masterpiece of sustained irony.

**Fiction** : *Robinson Crusoe*, 1719 : in which his gifts of invention are seen at their happiest ; *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, 1720 ; *Captain Singleton*, 1720 ; *Moll Flanders*, 1722 ; *Colonel Jack*, 1722 ; *Roxana*, 1724 : all exercises in the art of realistic invention ; fertile in practical resource ; showing an intimate acquaintance with low life ; lack the feeling of beauty or nobility in character, and creative imagination ; entirely prosaic in their vision. Akin to his fictions is the circumstantial *Journal of the Plague Year*, 1722—one of his best-liked books. *A Tour through the whole of Britain*, 3 vols., 1724-6, is a favourable example of the suitable use of his workmanlike prose.

**Jonathan Swift** (1667-1745) : posthumous child of English parents ; born at Dublin ; kidnapped by his nurse ; educated at Kilkenny and Trinity College, Dublin ; came to live with his mother at Leicester ; entered the service of Sir William Temple at Moor Park ; ordained, 1694 ; prebendary of Kilroot, 1694-6 ; returned to Moor Park, 1696, where he wrote the *Tale of a Tub* and for the first time met Esther Johnson (Stella) ; made the acquaintance of the London wits ; wrote political and other pamphlets ; edited the *Examiner*, 1710-11 ; had great influence in bringing the Tories to power ; was at the height of his political power, 1710-13 ; joined the Scriblerus Club with Pope, Arbuthnot

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(p. 138), and others ; was rewarded with the deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin, 1714 ; spent the rest of his life in Ireland, with only occasional visits to London ; a soured and disappointed genius ; cheered by the comradeship of Stella (died 1728) and tragically admired by Vanessa (Hester Vanhomrigh : died 1723) ; interfered in Irish politics—e.g. on the occasion of the proposed issue of “Wood’s halfpence,” 1722, with the *Drapier Letters*, which made him an Irish hero ; fell into morbid ill-health, and expired “a driveller and a show,” 1745.

An arrogant and tempestuous genius ; often described as the Rabelais of English literature ; this unfair to the Frenchman, who did not share Swift’s embittered misanthropy ; himself moral, frugal, benevolent, tender (to Stella at least)—his work is often disfigured by obscenity, malignity, spite ; his philosophy a gloomy and unredeemed pessimism, inspired by his own failure to achieve power ; his irony grim ; his cynical humour overwhelming ; his mockery unrestrained ; his judgment overcome by his gift of ridicule ; his aim that of a publicist, rather than a man of letters ; not excelled in his combative energy, in his mastery of the clear style in prose ; no stronger prose than his—but it is strength without beauty or delight ; of his own two tests of a cultured style he has light without sweetness.

**Chief Works:** *a Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, published together, 1704 ; *An Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, 1708 ; the *Examiner*, 1710–11 ; the *Journal to Stella*, 1710–13 ; first pamphlet on Irish trade, 1720 ; *Drapier Letters*, 1722–4 ; *Gulliver’s Travels*, 1726 ; *A Modest Proposal*, 1729.

**Tale of a Tub :** a brilliant satire on the Roman Catholic and Dissenting churches, written in the interests of the Church of England ; without bitterness, but full of mocking raillery, which did not leave religion itself unscathed ; doubtless prevented Swift from obtaining the high preferment he desired.

**The Battle of the Books :** a witty account of the controversy between the Ancients and the Moderns ; in the battle, victory goes to the Ancients (the wrong side), but the book is delightful throughout ; it contains the apologue of the bee and the spider ; the bee the maker of sweetness and light, the spider spinning useless verbal pedantries.

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**Journal to Stella**: letters written to Stella during his life in London, 1710-13; partly in the "little language"; artless, simple, natural; almost as good as Pepys; reveals the better side of Swift, and tells the tale of his doings, great and little. His relation with Stella not dishonourable to either; but it was not a lover's, and they were probably never married.

**Gulliver's Travels**: Swift's contribution to the satire planned by the Scriblerus Club; a work of great power and originality; a satire on human nature; its object to "vex the world"; the visits to Lilliput and Brobdingnag comparatively clean and full of fascination; the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos wild and absurd, as well as disgusting; yet the picture is painted with indelible clearness.

**Irish Pamphlets**: Swift did not love Ireland; but merely took such opportunities as came to irritate Walpole and his government, and to vent his spleen; his *Modest Proposal* for preventing Irish children from being a burden to their parents—i.e. that they should be eaten!—a terrible piece of irony, the work of a madman with a hideously lucid mind.

**Poems**: not numerous, or poetical; a few have interest in their personal reference—e.g. the bantering humour of the ode *On the Death of Dr. Swift*, and the matter-of-fact friendship revealed in *Cadenus and Vanessa*; he is not to be considered seriously as a poet.

**John Arbuthnot** (1667-1735): an able man of science; physician to Queen Anne; a distinguished wit; friend of Swift and Pope; a man of high character and fine intellect; leading spirit of the Scriblerus Club, designed to satirize false tastes in learning and manners; wrote *The History of John Bull*, 1713—a clever contemporary satire; *The Art of Political Lying*, 1712—in Swift's vein of irony and with an almost equal force of style; and the *Memoirs of Martin Scriblerus*, 1741—the chief product of the Club.

**John Dennis** (1657-1734): a shrewd critic and thorn in the flesh to Pope; wrote vigorously, often with sense, but frequently without good temper.

**Richard Bentley** (1662-1742): famous as an erudite scholar; edited Horace, Terence and *Paradise Lost* with great critical acumen; his essays show a clear logical mind expressing itself in crisp and pointed prose: e.g. his *Dissertation upon the Letters of Phalaris* (1699) and *Remarks on the Discourse of Free Thinking*.

**Francis Atterbury** (1662-1732): bishop of Rochester, 1713; exiled for treason, 1723; friend of Swift and Pope; eminent in his day as scholar, wit and preacher; his sermons and dissertations have the merit of clearness, and occasionally rise to real eloquence.

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**The Earl of Shaftesbury** (Anthony, 3rd earl : 1671-1713) : a scholar of wide culture and good taste ; an optimist and a deist ; accepted Locke's philosophy ; has been severely criticized for shallowness and obscurity ; had not thought out his philosophy clearly ; consequently a difficult writer, but not without vigour at his best ; *Characteristics of Men, Matters, Opinions, Times*, 1711, passed through many editions.

**Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke** (1678-1751) : a brilliant Tory statesman ; Secretary for War, 1704-8 ; Secretary of State, 1710-14 ; in exile, 1714-23 ; the focus of opposition to Walpole, but never again obtained power ; a clever but superficial writer ; with a great reputation as orator, patriot and philosopher ; now regarded rather as a flashy charlatan—insincere and meretricious ; his writings stamped with the qualities of the orator or special pleader ; his philosophy not original, nor half-digested ; of his works the best are : the *Letter to Sir W. Windham*, an apology for his conduct, sophisticated but able—written, 1716 or 1717 ; *Letters on the Study of History*, 1735 (pub. 1752) ; *The Idea of a Patriot King*, 1749—his best-known work.

**Lady Mary Wortley Montagu** (1689-1762) : one of our most distinguished letter-writers ; a woman of exceptional knowledge and experience ; her husband ambassador at Constantinople, 1716-18, whence some of her best letters were written ; lived in the midst of London society, 1718-39 ; lived abroad, apart from her husband, 1739-61 ; her letters to her husband and her daughter are valuable as memorials of the time ; witty, keen in observation, a little too conscious of their graces.

**The Earl of Chesterfield** (Philip Dormer Stanhope : 1694-1773) : a statesman who held many important offices without achieving greatness ; leader of taste ; literary patron ; remembered now by his *Letters to his Son*, 1774—a complete reflection of the cynical wisdom and polite culture of the age ; the philosophy of a successful man of the world ; safe and prudent advice on conduct and style ; cold, selfish, Machiavellian ; but over-polished ; remarks on literature often to the point, always inspired by common sense.

**George Berkeley** (1685-1753) : the greatest master of style among our great philosophers ; an Irishman of humble origin ; at Trinity College, Dublin, 1700-13 ; travelled abroad in various rôles, 1714-20 ; dean of Derry, 1724 ; tried to realize his missionary scheme in the Bermudas ; lived at Rhode Island, 1729-31 ; bishop of Cloyne, 1734-52 ; died at Oxford, 1753. His chief works : *Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, 1709 ; *Principles of Human Knowledge*, 1710—

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two remarkable books which made his reputation as an original philosopher ; *Hylas and Philonous*, 1713—a Platonic dialogue of great beauty in thought and style ; *Alciphron or the Minute Philosopher*, 1732—a reply to the deists in very attractive style ; *Siris*, 1744—a treatise, nominally on the virtues of tar-water, but containing much more. As a philosopher, influenced by Locke and Plato ; a phenomenalist and idealist ; the supremacy and permanence of the spiritual over the material his guiding principle ; a man of high character and enthusiasm ; whose fine prose converts an abstruse philosophy into delightful and suggestive reading.

**Joseph Butler** (1692–1752) : bishop of Bristol, dean of St. Paul's, and bishop of Durham ; his *Sermons*, delivered at the Rolls chapel, published 1726 ; *The Analogy of Religion*, 1736—one of our most famous apologetic books ; attempts to show the harmony of revealed religion with the order of nature ; an intellectual work calling for hard thinking ; but full of sound thought, informed by zeal for truth ; never appealed to the emotions or passions ; even his sermons are close-packed with reason, and destitute of the flowery graces of eloquence.

**William Law** (1686–1761) : a strange compound of the Nonjuring High Churchman with principles that link him with Methodism ; in later life a mystic and practical Christian ; an isolated figure in the century ; a lucid prose-writer with a scathing pen and a gift of portraiture ; wrote, in the *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, 1729, a book of real and practical piety, strong literary power, and deep influence especially among the Wesleyans ; the same gifts of earnestness and seriousness, wit and irony, logic and strength of intellect are seen in other works : e.g. *Letters to the Bishop of Bangor*, 1717 ; *Christian Perfection*, 1726.

Other writers on religious subjects who deserve mention are : **Samuel Clarke** (1675–1729), an orthodox theologian tending towards deism ; wrote on natural religion ; defended Newton in controversy with Leibnitz ; **Conyers Middleton** (1683–1750), more

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famous for his *Life of Cicero*, 1741, than for his vigorous theological polemic; **William Warburton** (1698–1779), bishop of Gloucester, the self-assertive expounder of Pope's *Essay on Man*, whose seven volumes are now nearly forgotten. His edition of Shakespeare recalls the work of **Lewis Theobald** (1688–1744), as editor of Shakespeare: he was a dull writer but brilliant emendator of the text.

**The Deists.** A group of men who sought to rationalize religious belief; not great writers, nor strong thinkers; but able and serious, e.g. **Matthew Tindal** (1656–1733) caused excitement with *Christianity as old as the Creation*, 1730; **Julius Toland** (1670–1722), author of *Christianity not Mysterious*, 1696—a bold attack, clever and unscrupulous; **Anthony Collins** (1676–1729), whose *Discourse on Freethinking*, 1713, drew the ridicule of Swift. Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke tended in the same direction; as also did **Bernard de Mandeville** (1670–1733), author of the once popular *Fable of the Bees*, 1714—a piece of rough Swiftian irony.

## D. Poetry

### I. ALEXANDER POPE (1688–1744)

(a) **Life:** Born in London; son of a successful merchant; a Roman Catholic; lived in early years near Windsor (Binfield); educated mainly at home; never became a scholar, but was widely read in poetry; was himself a precocious poet—"I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came"; made the acquaintance of Swift, 1708; moved a good deal among the London wits; made a fortune from his *Iliad*, 1711; was henceforth recognized as the chief poet of his time; moved to Chiswick, 1716; on the death of his father, 1717, moved to Twickenham, 1718, where with his grotto and his books, he resided till his death, the centre of a group of admiring friends and the scorpion of many enemies.

(b) **Character:** A man of feeble health; deformed; irritable and sensitive; vain and spiteful; a loyal Catholic outwardly, in spite of its disadvantages; rarely "straight" in his dealings: e.g. the *Odyssey* issued by him was mostly the work of others, and his correspondence was wholly falsified in his own interest; though he affected to be a rake and indulged himself in lewd talk, his life was probably morally sound; his con-

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tempt for vice and pretence genuine ; his bitter satire generally falls on the deserving, but is always instigated by personal quarrels ; his life a " long disease " of body and mind, but his intellect always clear and sharp ; gave the world no original or creative ideas, no great moral or spiritual impulse, but much that " oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed."

(c) **Relations with Contemporaries :** He was in touch with most of the Tory leaders ; was a friend of Swift, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke ; a member of the Scriblerus Club ; at first on good terms with Addison : quarrelled with him for his commendation of Tickell's *Homer* ; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had a similar fate ; at home he was a good son, and a loyal friend to his companion, Martha Blount ; among the victims of his satire were Dennis, Theobald, Colley Cibber, and a host of forgotten scribblers ; in early life he was a friend of Wycherley ; at the end he received the homage of Warburton ; in spite of his equivocal ways, he was ungrudgingly admired by Swift and all his friends.

(d) **Works :** *Pastorals*, 1708 ; *Essay on Criticism*, 1711 ; *The Rape of the Lock*, 1712 ; *Windsor Forest*, 1713 ; Translation of the *Iliad*, 1715 ; paraphrase of Chaucer's *Hous of Fame*, 1715 ; *Eloisa to Abelard*, 1717 ; *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*, 1717 ; edition of Shakespeare, 1725 ; the *Odyssey*, 1726 ; the *Dunciad*, 1728 ; *Essay on Man*, 1733 ; *Moral Essays*, 1735 ; *Imitations of Horace*, 1733-8 ; the *Dunciad* (4th Book), 1742.

**Pastorals :** smooth but immature verse ; *Windsor Forest* has some pleasant descriptions ; but Pope's view of nature is secondhand, through books ; the work of a clever youth.

**Essay on Criticism :** expounds the principles of classic criticism in excellent verse ; may seem commonplace to us, but struck its own day brilliantly ; worthy to stand beside the similar work of Horace and Boileau ; full of effective lines and quotable passages, if weak as a whole.

**The Rape of the Lock :** written to heal a feud between two families in society ; a burlesque of ponderous epics ; in mock-heroic style ; a brilliant trifle ; the wit and polish do not disguise the humour ; the satire, at times true to the

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mark and keen, is not bitter ; the most purely delightful of Pope's poems.

**Homer** : the *Iliad* a vigorous rendering of the story into heroic couplets ; not a faithful translation ; " a pretty poem," but not Homer (Bentley) ; his small knowledge of Greek made a scholar's version impossible ; it should be considered as an original poem, showing how much can be done with the heroic couplet by a powerful intellect ; the true epic of the age ; its success very great ; well-deserved, as the greatest poem of the time. The *Odyssey* much inferior ; issued as Pope's, but largely the work of two minor poets, **William Broome** (1689-1745) and **Elijah Fenton** (1683-1730).

**Elegies** : *Eloisa to Abelard* is Pope's serious treatment of passionate love ; splendid rhetoric ; no personal emotion ; no lyrical power. The *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady* is an exercise in the expression of grief ; in splendid and passionate eloquence, but not personally felt ; a masterly and finished composition ; but makes no appeal to the heart ; his genius not at all lyrical.

**The Dunciad** : an elaborate satire on pretentious incompetence and dullness ; encouraged by Swift and the Scriblerus Club ; enthrones Theobald as king of the dunces ; Theobald replaced by Cibber in the second version ; full of spiteful personalities ; unjust to individuals like Defoe Bentley, Whitefield, Theobald ; but on the whole just in its aim : to purify literature from the hireling and the dunce ; done with little humour but plenty of sting, without joy but with much coarseness ; yet always clever and occasionally grand.

**Essay on Man** : an attempt to explain man's place in the universe ; to justify on rational grounds the position of the Christian as against the deist ; met thus the thought of the time ; its philosophy not original, but owed much to Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury ; the ideas not completely worked out ; individual passages very fine ; in expression, in dignity, in impressive rhetoric, nothing finer than his best paragraphs ; but the whole result a vague and unsatisfying pantheism pleasing neither to deist or Christian.

**Moral Essays** : form with the *Essay on Man* part of a much greater poem (Warburton) never completed ; contain some of his best and most characteristic work : (i) " Of the knowledge and Characters of Men," 1733—develops his theory of the ruling passion ; (ii) " Of the Characters of Women," 1735, contains some of his bitter portraits of women—Sappho, Atossa, Rufa, etc. ; (iii) " Of the use of Riches," 1732, dedicated to Lord Bathurst ; (iv) On the same theme, 1731, dedicated to Lord Burlington ; (v) On

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collecting antiquities, 1715, dedicated to Addison, and inspired by an essay on medals in *The Spectator*.

**Imitations of Horace**: suggested by Bolingbroke; a happy inspiration; free imitations, not translations; the age of Horace not unlike that of Pope; but Pope without the urbane melancholy and sad humour of his model; strongest when personal; weakest when dealing with general ethical truths; the consummation of his work; the most brilliant satires in English. There are six "imitations"; with the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* as prologue, and an equally brilliant epilogue issued under the title 1738. The prologue is the best of the satires; very personal; very venomous; at the same time an attempt to justify his employment of satire—on the whole successful; it contains the picture of Addison as Atticus.

**Correspondence**: some letters issued by a pirate-book-seller, Curril, 1726; garbled and issued with much deceit by Pope, 1735; openly, 1737; the letters to and from Swift have considerable interest; Pope spoiled them by his falsifications of date and contents; the prose lacks clearness; the style is affected and artificial, and does not suggest the lucid author of the poems. The *Treatise on Bathos*, 1728, is a better specimen of his prose.

(e) **Characteristics**: Stress often laid on deficiencies—absence of lyric emotion; no great imaginative gift; no creative power; no subtle ear for melody: but he understood his powers, and did not aim at these; the poet of his age: hence didactic, critical, satirical, not epic or dramatic or lyrical; a poet of the intellect, not of the heart; a master of apt phrase; the most quotable of our poets except Shakespeare; has given imperishable lustre to thoughts that might have been mere platitudes; his influence immense; dominated the poetry of his own and the next generation; makes all his contemporaries into minor poets; perfected the heroic couplet as the conventional classical mode; his authority not overthrown till the romantic movement.

(f) **Appreciations**: If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found?—JOHNSON.

The greatest literary artist that England has seen.—THACKERAY.

In his own province he still stands unapproachably alone . . . Measured by any high standard of imagination, he will be found wanting; tried by any test of wit he is unrivalled.—LOWELL.

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## II. POPE'S CONTEMPORARIES

**Matthew Prior** (1664–1721) : of humble birth ; became the friend of Charles Montague ; rose to a high position in the public service ; as British plenipotentiary at Paris, 1711–13 ; imprisoned by the Whigs, 1715–17 ; issued his poems in two successful volumes, 1709, 1718 ; his longer poems have lost their reputation : e.g. *Alma*, in Hudibrastic style ; *Solomon*, a dull epic ; *Henry and Emma*, a poor travesty of the *Nut-brown Maid* ; remembered by his light *vers d'occasion* ; graceful and easy verse, witty and irresponsible ; their dainty touch unsurpassed : e.g. “*Answer to Chloe Jealous*,” “*A Better Answer*,” etc.

**John Gay** (1688–1732) : began life as a mercer in London ; turned to literature ; became the friend of Pope, Arbuthnot, and Swift ; was indolent, thriftless, and good-natured—the spoiled child of the wits ; wrote *The Shepherd's Week*, 1714—six pastorals intended for burlesque ; *Trivia*, 1715, a mock-heroic and vivid poem of the London streets ; *Fables*, 1727—not worth much ; *The Beggar's Opera*, 1728, a burlesque of Italian operas, very successful, through the famous character of Captain Macheath ; had a moderate lyric gift : e.g. *Black Ey'd Susan*.

**Thomas Parnell** (1679–1718) : an Irish clergyman and member of the Scriblerus Club ; his poems warmly praised by Swift and Pope ; in his best poems struck a deeper note than Pope : e.g. the *Night-Piece on Death* and *Hymn to Contentment*. *The Hermit* is also worthy of remembrance ; his works were edited by Pope, 1723.

**Thomas Tickell** (1686–1740) : began a translation of Homer but gave way to Pope, 1715 ; wrote a number of poems but survives only for his fine elegy on the death of Addison.

**Ambrose Phillips** (1671–1749) : through his *Pastorals*, 1709, provoked the jealousy of Pope ; his tragedy, *The Distrest Mother*, 1712, was highly praised by Addison ; his mawkish odes to children have given us the word namby-pamby in memory of him.

**Samuel Garth** (1660–1718) : was a physician and obtained fame with *The Dispensary*, 1699, an effective mock-heroic poem, little read now.

**William Somerville's** (1692–1742) : *The Chase*, 1735, is even less of a poem.

**Allan Ramsay** (1686–1758) : a wig-maker and a bookseller ; revived Scottish poetry ; himself wrote songs ; but did better work by collecting the popular poems in *The Evergreen*, 1724, and *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, 1724, which inspired Scott and Burns ; *The Gentle Shepherd*, 1725, a pleasant pastoral tale with a real flavour of rustic life his best original work ; popular with all classes in Scotland.

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**James Thomson** (1700-48) : born in Scotland ; educated at Edinburgh ; came to London and for a time acted as a tutor ; published *Winter*, 1726, and became famous as a poet ; completed *The Seasons*, 1730 ; wrote a number of unsuccessful plays ; travelled abroad, and wrote *Liberty*, 1735, an unreadable poem ; settled at Richmond, on good terms with Pope ; lived indolently and too well, and closed his career with *The Castle of Indolence*, 1748 ; in the age of Pope he was a poet of the imagination ; influenced by the artificial diction of the time ; yet true to his object.

**The Seasons** : [Winter, 1726 ; Summer, 1727 ; Spring, 1728 ; Autumn, 1730] ; at one time one of our most popular poems ; great power of description ; a minute love and knowledge of nature ; a poem of the country ; in blank verse ; often too florid ; often conventional in style ; lacking in human interest ; yet a quiet revolt against the Augustan school ; its influence not at once obvious—apparent in Cowper.

**The Castle of Indolence** : a dream-allegory in Spenserian stanzas ; his best poetry here ; the verse pure and harmonious, producing the right mood ; many felicitous lines and short passages.

**William Shenstone** (1714-63) : once famous for his gardening experiments at the Leasowes, Halesowen ; author of one or two minor poems worth remembering : e.g. the *Pastoral Ballad* and *The Dying Kid* ; also of *The Schoolmistress*, 1742, in Spenserian stanzas—a graceful and pleasantly humorous poem.

**John Dyer** (? 1699-1758) : a Welshman, had a similar interest to Thomson ; a real lover of nature with a strong tendency to moralizing ; without reaching greatness, he yields much pleasant reading in *Grongar Hill*, 1726 ; *The Ruins of Rome*, 1740 ; and especially *The Fleece*, 1757.

**William Falconer** (1732-69) : author of *The Shipwreck*, 1762, may be mentioned here ; his poem is not a great success : its vivid realism does not fit in with the artificial smoothness of the couplet ; yet it has passages of strength and power.

**Edward Young** (1681-1765) : educated at Winchester and Oxford ; fellow of All Souls, 1708 ; wrote a number of poor poems in heroic couplets ; three bombastic tragedies ; and a number of satires which brought him fame and wealth, 1728 ; the satires are far inferior to Pope's in literary skill, but of higher moral tone ;

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became rector of Welwyn, 1730 ; there wrote his best-known work, *Night Thoughts*, 1742 : an epic of life, death and immortality ; in Miltonic blank verse, at its best not unworthy of its theme ; uneven, and tending to be over-ornate and rhetorical ; rich in flights of fancy, not sustained ; a dignified but sombre descant on immortality ; not deep in thought ; infused religion with sentiment ; long popular especially among the middle class ; now remembered chiefly through its “purple patches.”

**Robert Blair** (1699–1746) : a Scottish clergyman ; author of *The Grave*, 1743—a sombre poem on the same theme as Young’s *Night Thoughts* ; much shorter, it is more effective ; maintains the dignity of the subject throughout ; in blank verse of real weight and beauty.

**Charles Wesley** (1708–88) : a greater poet than his brother, the evangelical reformer, John Wesley ; a scholar rather than a preacher ; his hymns, spontaneous and sincere, did much for the Wesleyan movement.

**Mark Akenside** (1721–70) : a learned physician whose frigid and dignified deportment is reflected in *The Pleasures of Imagination*, 1744—a severely stately poem ; and the *Hymn to the Naiads*, 1746—overweighted with its learning and its correctness, but not repellent.

**John Armstrong** (1709–79) : another physician, who deemed all subjects suitable for verse ; *The Art of Preserving Health*, 1744, in Thomsonian verse, is his chief work.

**John Byrom** (1691–1763) : a voluble versifier, inventor of a system of shorthand, a disciple of William Law, wrote a well-known epigram—“God bless the King,” and the Christmas hymn, “Christians, awake !”—but little else that will be remembered ; though he had a pleasant humour.

**Richard Glover** (1712–85) : a city merchant and politician, with poetic ambitions ; an elaborate epic, *Leonidas*, 1737, was compared in its day with *Paradise Lost* ; it has a certain power but no poetic fire ; but is better than his *Boadicea*, 1738, or *The Atheniad*, posthumously published, 1787.

## CHAPTER X

### LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### A. General Notes

(a) The leading characteristics of the preceding period continue ; but modified by such events as the foundation of our empire, 1757-63 ; the loss of the American colonies, with the political consequences thereof, 1773-83 ; the French Revolution, 1789-95 ; by the growth of Methodism and a more human and tolerant outlook on religion ; by the general softening of manners, which makes, e.g. the tales of Smollett look very coarse now. Prose grew in variety and dignity, not without a tendency to pomposity ; poetry emancipated itself from the method of Pope, and became more comprehensive in theme and style ; history, philosophy, economics, natural observation advanced, and added new masterpieces ; the novel became the chief form of literature for the majority—a new development ; common sense and a distrust of the vague and the fanatical still prevailed as the canon of taste ; hence the age is one of “rest and refreshment” (Saintsbury), not of excitement and stimulant. Yet it produced our greatest history, our greatest political writer, our greatest biographer, and was exceptionally rich in writers of memoirs and letters. Johnson its characteristic figure.

(b) Romance was casting its shadows before : the love of nature, begun in Thomson ; Gray, Chatterton, Cowper, Blake ; the publication of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1765—an uncritical edition of old English poems and ballads, but a very great stimulus to the literary study of the past ; Macpherson's *Ossian* (p. 172) opened the vague wonderland of the Gaels ; the brothers Warton introduced freer canons of criticism than would have been favoured by Pope. All this helped to make ready the ground for *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798.

(c) Our literature had more influence in Europe than usual and received more attention: e.g. Richardson on Rousseau ; Burke on Lessing. France lost her pre-eminence as the literary throne of Europe. Yet during the century she produced Montesquieu (1689-1755), a famous writer on political science (*Esprit des Lois*), who owed much to Locke and the British constitution and transmitted the results of his thought to Hume and Burke ; Lesage (1668-1747), whose novel *Gil Blas* influenced both

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Fielding and Smollett, while **Marivaux** (1688–1763) anticipated Richardson in *Marianne*, 1731; **Diderot** (1713–84), a pioneer in criticism, chief author of the great *Encyclopédie*; **Voltaire** (1694–1778), a voluminous writer, good in many styles, conservative in the literary sense, but revolutionary in ideas; and **Rousseau** (p. 175)

## B. Johnson and His Circle

**James Boswell** (1740–95): born at Auchinleck, Ayr; of good Scots family; came up to London, 1760; became popular in gay society; made the acquaintance of Johnson, 1762; henceforward was as much as possible his admiring satellite; made a tour abroad, where he met Voltaire and Paoli; published his *Tour in Corsica*, 1768; went to the Hebrides with Johnson, 1773; visited Lichfield with him, 1778; spent much time in Johnson's company till his death, 1784; fell into a life of foolish dissipation, from which emerged his *Life of Johnson*, 1791; had published his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 1785, a useful appendix to the *Life*, and livelier than Johnson's own account.

His great book the masterpiece among the world's biographies; a full-length portrait of Johnson as he lived; his actions and sayings set down with a hero-worshipper's fidelity; not a mere cento of anecdotes and sayings; a carefully-written narrative; reveals the author's vanities and follies; yet is not the work of a fool, but of an artist; through it Johnson became one of the most respected among men of letters, and Boswell has the reflected glory of having understood his greatness and rendered it imperishable.

The book is equally valuable for its pictures of the other members of the Club: Burke, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Garrick, Beauclerk, etc., and for others who enter occasionally into his pages: Wilkes, Paoli, Gibbon, Sheridan, etc. Among the friends of Johnson was Mrs. Thrale (afterwards Mrs. Piozzi, 1741–1821), a vivacious and witty woman whose *Anecdotes*, 1786, and *Letters*, 1788, present other aspects of Johnson in an interesting form; Johnson often visited her at Streatham.

**Samuel Johnson** (1709–84): son of a Lichfield bookseller; educated at the grammar school there; went to Oxford, but was compelled to leave before

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taking a degree (by poverty?) ; was an unsuccessful usher for a time ; went to Birmingham and began hack work for booksellers ; married Elizabeth Porter (a widow), 1735 ; went to London to try his fortune in literature—he had already completed most of *Irene*, 1737 ; was employed as a parliamentary reporter on the *Gentleman's Magazine* ; published *London*, 1738, which received favourable notice from Pope ; worked hard but with little encouragement ; produced the *Life of Savage*, 1744 ; began the *Dictionary*, 1747 ; published the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 1749 ; failure of his tragedy *Irene*, though produced by Garrick, 1749 ; brought out the *Rambler*, 1750–2 ; completed the *Dictionary*, 1755 ; brought out the *Idler*, 1758–60 ; wrote *Rasselas* to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral, 1759 ; awarded a pension of £300 by Lord Bute, 1762 ; started the famous Club, 1764, and became the literary dictator of London ; edited Shakespeare, 1765 ; went with Boswell to the Hebrides, 1773, and published his *Journey to the Hebrides*, 1775 ; wrote his *Lives of the Poets*, 1777–81 ; otherwise we have nothing but the conversations recorded by Boswell to represent his last years.

Johnson holds a unique position in literature ; scarcely remembered by his writings, he is the best-known of eighteenth century writers ; this due to his personal character and influence : the embodiment of sturdy and honest common sense ; won his position in spite of disadvantages of person, health, and temper ; a man of strong prejudices ; an unbending Tory ; a pious and sincere Churchman ; a hater of cant and pretence ; undaunted and unspoiled by struggle and adversity ; rude and uncouth in manner, but tender and sympathetic at heart ; generous to promising authors : e.g. late in life he recognized the merits of Sheridan and Crabbe ; his greatest service the emancipation of literature from the patron ; thus dignified the profession of letters ; his prose-style ponderous and full of high-sounding Latinisms, but weighty and impressive ; his criticism based upon the principles of Pope ; shows good sense and real appreciation of good work ; failed to appreciate Milton

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and Gray ; had no feeling for nature, no romance ; at home in London and in the Club ; there he dominated all minds, including such giants as Burke, Reynolds, Garrick ; his influence always made against insincerity, humbug, immorality.

**Poems** : *London*, a free paraphrase of Juvenal's third satire ; artificial in plan ; classical in form ; vigorous and direct pictures of life in London. The *Vanity of Human Wishes*, a similar paraphrase of Juvenal's tenth satire ; contains some impressive rhetoric and weighty thoughts ; not so brilliant as Pope ; but less bitter, more resigned, preaching a brave pessimism. A few minor poems help to show that he lacked the true poet's imagination.

**Essays** : lacked Addison's light touch and Steele's genial humanity ; but have a good deal of dignified reflection, in his heavy and weighty prose.

**Rasselas** : an attempt at the novel ; has no interest as a story ; but is full of wisdom and practical philosophy, in his best style ; reveals the man better than any of his works.

**Lives of the Poets** : written to serve as introductions to an edition of the poets ; are excellent examples of biographical criticism ; written with sanity and judgment ; do full justice to such poets as Cowley, Waller, Dryden, Pope ; but even the best sayings in them do not touch the terse and triumphant vigour of his conversation.

**The Dictionary** : has much good sense and did good work, but is superseded ; interesting for the Letter to Chesterfield, its would-be patron, a masterpiece of calm and dignified rebuke, marking an epoch in the history of literature.

**Oliver Goldsmith** (1728-74) : born in an Irish parsonage ; his youth spent at Lissoy, Kilkenny ; educated at Trinity College, Dublin ; went to Edinburgh to study medicine ; was abroad four years, living a vagrant life ; returned to England, 1756 ; failed in various employments ; contributed essays to *The Bee*, 1759, and the *Public Ledger*, 1760—republished as *The Citizen of the World*, 1762 ; was introduced to Johnson, 1761, and joined the Club, 1764 ; made his first hit as a poet with *The Traveller*, 1764 ; published *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 1766 ; *The Good-Natur'd Man*, his first comedy, performed at Covent Garden, 1768 ; *The Deserted Village*, 1770 ; *She Stoops to Conquer*, 1773 ;

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wrote, besides, histories, biographies and other compilations, and the two poems *Retaliation* and *The Haunch of Venison*. In character shiftless, extravagant, unpractical; always in debt; shy and awkward in Boswell's hands; but admired by Johnson in spite of his absurdities. As a writer he did everything well; in his mastery of a simple and charming prose; in his easy control of descriptive verse; in his artless and unstudied humour—he surpassed all his contemporaries; inferior in robust manliness to many, in wit to Sheridan; not original in his themes or methods, but gave an individual touch to all.

**The Traveller**: reflects his Continental experiences; didactic in aim; fails in its purpose; but survives for its admirable descriptions and the cheery optimism of its tone.

**The Deserted Village**: also didactic in its aim and in that respect again unsatisfying; a poem of country life, with fresh descriptions and humorous character-sketches; especially interesting when it carries reminiscences of his youth; its merits superficial: no deep insight into nature: no analysis of character: is essentially of the eighteenth century; its use of the heroic couplet improves on Pope—in freedom and in sustained passages

**Retaliation**: a fragment; perhaps his best poem; memorable for its characterization of Reynolds, Garrick and Burke.

**Essays**: light in touch and easy in style; fresh and spontaneous in manner; humorous and skilful in character-drawing; have merits denied to Addison or Johnson.

**Vicer of Wakefield**: as a novel absurd; its plot improbable, with wild coincidences to help it out; its characters (like Goldsmith) ridiculous, but very human and lovable, especially Dr. Primrose, Moses, and Olivia; a "prose idyll," deserving its high reputation in Europe; highly praised by Goethe; in style and sentiment wholly admirable; as pleasing in the study as the home.

**Comedies**: *The Good-Natur'd Man* not a complete success; *She Stoops to Conquer*, one of our best comedies of manners; with excellent situations; abundance of wit, humour and fun; absence of sentimentality and pretence; and in Tony Lumpkin at least a permanent comic type.

**Appreciations**. "Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll."—**GARRICK**.

"Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit."—**JOHNSON**.

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**Richard Brinsley Sheridan** (1751–1816) : an Irishman, son of Thomas Sheridan, an admirer and butt of Johnson's ; educated at Harrow ; made a romantic marriage with Eliza Linley, 1773 ; produced *The Rivals* at Covent Garden, 1775 ; wrote the libretto for *The Duenna*, 1775 ; acquired a share in Drury Lane ; produced there *A Trip to Scarborough*, 1777, based upon Vanbrugh's *Relapse* ; produced *The School for Scandal*, 1777 ; and *The Critic*, 1779 ; entered parliament, 1780 ; joined in the impeachment of Warren Hastings ; was an eloquent orator, but obtained no high place in politics ; lived a fast life, and died heavily in debt. As a man he lacked ballast and soundness ; uncertain and brilliant. As a dramatist he is of the school of Congreve ; a master of dialogue and stagecraft ; with a real genius for comic characterization.

**The Rivals** : a brilliant comedy ; amusing ; well-constructed ; with an obvious plot, but ingenious situations ; Mrs. Malaprop and Bob Acres original and immortal types ; Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and Lydia cleverly done, but more familiar.

**The School for Scandal** : surpasses *The Rivals* in brilliancy of dialogue and wit ; the cleverest comedy of manners in English ; most effective on the stage ; full of real fun and pleasant satire ; Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, Joseph and Charles Surface, Moses, Lady Sneerwell—the best of a fine gallery of individual portraits.

**The Critic** : a farce, burlesquing the tragedies of Richard Cumberland ; an exquisite caricature ; Sir Fretful Plagiary, Puff, Dangle—excellent character-sketches.

**Pizarro** : 1799, a moderate tragedy, was his last play.

**The Drama.** Fairly active in this period ; revivals of Shakespeare, Jonson, etc., frequent : the representations of **David Garrick** (1717–79) famous ; comedy of manners maintained in the method of Congreve and Vanbrugh ; sentimental comedy continued, but produced nothing great. Among the playwrights were Fielding (p. 155) ; Garrick ; **Samuel Foote** (1720–77), famous for his personal satirical farces, such as *The Mayor of Garratt*, 1763, praised by Hazlitt ; **George Colman** (1732–94), a writer of comedy of some wit, who collaborated with Garrick in the successful *Clandestine Marriage*, 1766 ; and **Richard Cumberland** (1732–1811), a pompous and vain dramatist of ability, the Fretful Plagiary of *The Critic*, successful in the comedies *The West Indian*, 1771, and *The Fashionable Lovers*, 1779. No new tragedy of any note appeared.

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## C. The Novel

**Origins.** The novel a reflection of life in prose ; no phase of life excluded ; not didactic in purpose ; has a similar aim to the drama ; may be romantic—i.e. based upon conventions, which must be self-consistent, as in Shakespeare's comedies ; its success dependent on plot and character—i.e. the novelist must be a good tale-teller and be able to work out the development of human nature in his chosen environment ; in the seventeenth century Bunyan came nearest to the method of the novel ; the writers of *Characters* too vague and general ; the heroic romances—e.g. Sir George Mackenzie's *Aretina*, 1661, and Congreve's *Incognita*, 1692—too artificial and removed from reality ; Mrs. Behn treated a domestic theme in that style—*The Fair Jilt*, 1698 ; Defoe introduced realistic fiction, a good tale, but no evolution of character ; Addison had the necessary skill in characterization, but his sketches lacked continuity ; thus the materials of realistic fiction were at hand, and with the languishing of the drama, the time was ripe for the novel proper when Richardson wrote *Pamela*, 1740.

**Samuel Richardson** (1689–1761) : born in Derbyshire, the son of a joiner ; was largely self-educated ; became a successful printer, and master of the Stationers' Company, 1754 ; early in life was a profuse letter-writer, a man of sentiment, and the confidant of ladies ; always keen to encourage virtue, especially of the practical sort ; prim, formal, precise ; vain and priggish ; had the honesty of the bourgeois, but no lofty imaginative gift ; understood women better than men ; wrote three novels : *Pamela*, 1740 ; *Clarissa Harlowe*, 1748 ; *Sir Charles Grandison*, 1751 ; all in the epistolary style, suitable to his minute analysis of personal emotion ; his greatness at once recognized abroad ; high praise from Diderot, Rousseau, Goethe ; his knowledge of the human heart admired by Johnson.

**Pamela** : "Virtue Rewarded" ; the story of a servant girl whose virtue resisted the advances of her master, and was ultimately rewarded by her marriage to him ; prolix and very slow in movement ; the ideal of virtue merely prudence ; to be read for its sentiment, not for its story or its morality ; commenced as a series of useful letters for the proper management of life.

**Clarissa Harlowe** : Virtue triumphant ; one of the greatest novels of sentiment in the world ; less offensive

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to the moral sense than *Pamela*; very long, but masterly in its analysis of feeling; an impressive tragedy, of deep and genuine pathos.

**Sir Charles Grandison**: Richardson's idea of the perfect gentleman; an insufferable prig; but some of the ladies about him are well portrayed.

**Henry Fielding** (1707-54): born in Somersetshire; a connexion of the Denbigh family; educated at Eton; went to Leyden to study law; returned to London, 1728; wrote many comedies, farces, lampoons: e.g. *Tom Thumb the Great*, 1731, and *The Historical Register*, 1737—containing a caricature of Walpole; was married; called to the Bar, 1740, and became a magistrate; published *Joseph Andrews*, 1742; *Miscellanies*, 1743, (including *Jonathan Wild*, and the grim grotesque, *A Journey from this World to the Next*); *Tom Jones*, 1749; *Amelia*, 1751; went abroad for his health, and died at Lisbon, leaving behind him the delightful *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, 1754.

His first novel begun as a parody of *Pamela*; in all respects the opposite of Richardson; a careless man of the world, with many human failings; as a moralist reserved his scorn for the hypocrite and liar (Blifil, Thwackum); was lenient to failings which did not injure good nature (*Tom Jones*); had seen much of the squalid and wretched side of life, and did not realize "success"; had a true sense of humour; surpassed Richardson in sympathy, in the wide range of his human interests, in literary art and style; his women more natural and not less perfect than Richardson's (*Fanny*, *Sophia*, *Amelia*); his novels rich in vitality, satire, true comedy, sane comment; invaluable pictures of manners; comic epic poems in prose; spacious, free, varied; his intrusions of his own reflections always happy; still remains one of the greatest of the world's novelists; prepared the way for Thackeray and Dickens.

**Joseph Andrews**: attempted to laugh *Pamela* out of court; developed into a rich comedy of manners; with characters copied from nature; humour and common sense opposed to excessive sentiment and selfish virtue; Parson Adams,

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simple-minded and healthy, one of the favourite characters of fiction ; Mrs. Slipslop, Mrs. Towhouse, and Fanny also worthy of mention.

**Tom Jones** : the “ story of a foundling ” ; the epic of youth ; Tom sows his wild oats, but suffers and retains our sympathies ; healthy in tone, full of freshness and vitality ; well-constructed and well-written ; living characters—e.g. Squire Western and Sophia, Blifil and Miss Bridget Allworthy, Thwackum and Square, Partridge ; has been described as the greatest book of the century.

**Amelia** : not so varied as *Tom Jones* ; a picture of London life, with some special attention to the interior of prisons ; and the pure character of Amelia as background ; she shows Fielding’s skill in the portraiture of women ; Major Bath is the comic figure of the book.

**The History of Jonathan Wild the Great** : an epic of crime ; a masterpiece of irony, in which a famous criminal, utterly bad, nearly becomes a hero ; no more powerful study of the possible blackness of human nature exists ; the Heartfree family supply the necessary artistic relief.

**Tobias George Smollett** (1721–71) : a Scotsman ; trained as a surgeon ; came to London, 1739 ; entered the navy ; was at Cartagena, 1741 ; stayed in the West Indies till 1744 ; returned to London and published *Roderick Random*, 1748 ; *Peregrine Pickle*, 1751 ; *Ferdinand, Count Fathom*, 1753 ; wrote plays, a translation of *Don Quixote*, 1755, and a *History of England*, 1758 ; *Sir Lancelot Greaves*, 1761 ; went to live at Leghorn, 1769 where he produced his best book, *Humphry Clinker*, 1771. He popularized the picaresque novel in England, a string of adventures, varied and humorous ; was often coarse and indecent, always vigorous and downright ; vivid and realistic in narrative and description ; showing abundant power, but little delicacy of taste or feeling ; below Fielding in knowledge of character and true humour ; influenced Dickens ; but is apt to be underrated and neglected because of the inequality of his work, and its lack of all intellectual interests.

**Roderick Random** : a spirited tale ; based upon *Gil Blas* ; autobiography ; no true plot ; vigorous male characters like Tom Bowling, Jack Rattlin, Morgan ; low life, but true and hearty.

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**Peregrine Pickle** : very good in parts and very bad in others ; Trunnion and Hatchway two memorable sailors.

**Ferdinand, Count Fathom** : a poor imitation of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*.

**Sir Lancelot Greaves** : another unsuccessful imitation—this time of *Don Quixote*.

**Humphry Clinker** : a novel in letters, describing a journey to Scotland ; has real humour and tenderness ; a better atmosphere than his other works ; also his most humanly drawn characters : Lismahago, Matt and Tabby Bramble, Humphry and his bride, Winifred Jenkins, with her amusing malapropisms.

**Laurence Sterne** (1713–68) : born in Ireland, the son of an army lieutenant ; went to Cambridge, 1733 ; became rector of Sutton, Yorks, where he lived some twenty years, neglecting his parish duties and storing his mind with out-of-the-way learning from Rabelais, Burton, etc. ; became famous with *Tristram Shandy*, 1759–66 ; came to London where he was lionized to the detriment of his health ; travelled abroad, and wrote *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, 1768 ; a humorist, and master of pathetic sentiment ; a master also of the unexpected ; comes into comparison with Rabelais in his frank indecencies and grotesque humour, hardly in wisdom ; almost contemptible in his love for tricks and poses, obscene leers and innuendos, heartless selfishness and excessive sentimentality ; but wholly admirable in his delicacy of style, subtlety of humour, skill in characterization ; My Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Mr. Walter Shandy, Dr. Slop, Parson Yorick but a few of his memorable characters ; his best passages—e.g. the death of Lefevre—among the masterpieces of English prose.

**Henry Mackenzie** (1745–1831) : essayist as well as novelist ; a leading figure in Edinburgh literary society ; imitated Sterne in *The Man of Feeling*, 1771 ; without the humour, the sentiment degenerates into the maudlin.

**John Moore** (1729–1803) : in *Zeluco*, 1786, imitated Smollett ; an impossible tale of villainy.

**Henry Brooke** (1703–83) : imitated the aims of Richardson in the long and tedious *Fool of Quality*, 1766, praised by John

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Wesley for its moral tone. A more successful imitator was **Robert Bage** (1728–1801) in such novels as *Hermsprong*, 1796.

**William Beckford** (1759–1844) : in *Vathek*, 1786, wrote one of our best novels of the supernatural ; it is grotesque, but imaginative and really oriental in colouring.

**The School of Terror.** **Mrs. Anne Radcliffe** (1764–1823) wrote energetically for a few years ; her novels are pseudo-historical ; employ all sorts of devices for producing mystery and terror ; mechanical and often trivial ; but in their essence romantic and imaginative ; show also a feeling for scenery but little sense of character : e.g. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794. **Clara Reeve** (1729–1807) in *The Old English Baron*, 1777, formed a link between the absurdities of *The Castle of Otranto* (p. 165) and the “ explained ” mysteries of Mrs. Radcliffe’s supernaturalism. To the same tribe belong *The Monk*, 1795, of **Matthew Gregory Lewis** (1775–1818) ; and the more powerful novels of **Charles Robert Maturin** (1782–1824), such as *Melmoth the Wanderer*, 1820.

**Novels of Purpose.** The novel applied to the support of political theory by **William Godwin** (1756–1836) in *Caleb Williams*, 1794 ; and **Thomas Holcroft** (1745–1809) in *Anna St. Ives*, 1792, and *Hugh Trevor*, 1794–7 : both men are revolutionist in sympathy, and their novels good examples of the type. **Thomas Day’s** (1748–89) *Sandford and Merton*, 1783–9, had popularity as an education novel : its author was an eccentric but kindly preacher.

**Fanny Burney** (1752–1840) : born at King’s Lynn ; daughter of a well-known musician ; produced *Evelina*, 1778, with which she charmed Johnson ; *Cecilia*, 1782 ; was assistant keeper of the robes to the Queen, 1786–91, —miserable through her ill-treatment by Madame Schwellenberg ; this life good for her diary, but bad for her novels ; married General D’Arblay, a French emigré, 1793 ; wrote *Camilla*, 1796 ; *The Wanderer* 1814 ; *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, 1832 ; an interesting *Diary*, published 1842.

**Evelina** : began the novel of domestic satire ; the experiences of a girl brought up in seclusion and suddenly thrown into London society ; written in letters in the manner of Richardson ; a pleasant comedy, easily written ; keen observation and a real delight in her light satire. *Cecilia* not so good, but still very readable. Later, her style became heavy and pompous : “ Johnsonese ” without the strength of the original.

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**Jane Austen** (1775–1817) : born at Steventon Rectory, Hants ; her life entirely uneventful ; wrote *Northanger Abbey* ; *Pride and Prejudice* ; and *Sense and Sensibility*, 1796–8 ; lived at Bath, 1801–9 ; and at Chawton, near her former home, 1809–17 ; wrote there *Emma* ; *Mansfield Park* ; *Persuasion* ; died at Winchester, 1817. She added to the sphere of the novel the humdrum incidents of everyday life ; nothing extraordinary happens in her tales ; no tragedy ; no violence ; no “terror” ; her vision limited to the little doings of a country village and of Bath ; her success lies in the completeness of her character-drawing, in her exquisitely fine irony, in her unfailing humour ; within her range she is unrivalled ; her literary workmanship consummate ; not appreciated by those who want highly-seasoned dishes ; but the most perfect of all novelists in the complete success with which she realized her aims ; the direct heiress and complement of Fielding ; in no sense romantic—rather the fine fruit of the classical eighteenth century.

*Northanger Abbey* not published till after her death, 1818 ; *Sense and Sensibility* appeared in 1811 ; *Pride and Prejudice* in 1812 ; *Mansfield Park* in 1814 ; *Emma* in 1816 ; and *Persuasion* in 1818. Highly appreciated by Scott, who wrote *St. Ronan's Well* in emulation of her ; her novels very even in merit ; all infused with her characteristic gifts ; *Pride and Prejudice*, with the ineffable Mr. Collins and the delightful Elizabeth Bennet, probably the favourite ; and *Emma* the most consummate in its skilful art.

## D. Miscellaneous Prose

### I. HISTORY AND POLITICS

A full and true conception of history not yet developed ; the erudite specialist, examining all available facts, appeared with Gibbon ; popular summaries of English history by Goldsmith and Smollet ; Hume's History (p. 163) a partisan work but broader in conception than others, and worthy to be mentioned as literature ; the philosophy of politics attracted the genius of Burke.

**William Robertson** (1721–93) : a learned scholar ; principal of Edinburgh University, 1762–92, and moderator of the

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Presbyterian assembly ; wrote a *History of Scotland*, 1759 ; *History of the Emperor Charles V*, 1769—his best work ; *History of America*, 1777 ; a good prose-writer, but pompous and monotonous ; anticipated the historical method of Gibbon, but with less complete erudition ; his powers of generalization on masses of facts considerable ; attempted to see events in just perspective ; a Whig in sympathies.

**Edward Gibbon** (1737–94) : born at Putney, in good circumstances ; spent some time at Westminster and Oxford, to little profit ; read much in a desultory manner ; became a Catholic under the influence of Bossuet ; sent by his father to a Protestant tutor at Lausanne, 1753 ; read Pascal and was introduced to Voltaire ; became a sceptic through his studies in history ; returned to England, 1758, and published an essay on the study of literature, in French ; served in the Hampshire Militia, 1759–62 ; again went to the continent, 1762 ; at Rome conceived the idea of his history, 1764 ; spent some years in close study for it ; after the death of his father (1770), settled in London, 1772 ; brought out the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776 ; having sat some years in parliament, obtained a sinecure worth £750 a year, 1779 ; finished Vols. II and III of his history, 1781 ; removed to Lausanne, where Vols. IV–VI were completed, 1787 ; returned to England, 1793, and died of dropsy in London, 1794 ; his *Memoirs* were issued under the editorship of Lord Sheffield, 1796 ; the complete *Autobiographies*, 1897.

**The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire** : a monumental work that can never be wholly superseded ; written in an ornate and stately prose, rising often to grandeur, occasionally pompous, never unworthy of the theme ; a masterly narrative of complex events ; great in conception, in arrangement, in proportion, in description ; full of life and colour ; strong alike in analysis of intrigue and in pictures of campaigns ; weak chiefly in his unsympathetic treatment of early Christianity ; a sceptic, and a cynic in morals, he did not understand the zealot ; in all other respects his treatment is entirely adequate.

**Autobiography** : a valuable addition to our literature of memoirs ; reveal the historian not as a great man planning

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one of the world's great books, but as an affected and egotistic cynic, a child of his epoch without noble enthusiasms; with these memoirs we can understand his inferiority to Johnson insisted on by Burke (Boswell).

**Edmund Burke** (1729-97): son of a Dublin solicitor; educated at Trinity College; studied for the Bar; came to London, 1750; lived by contributions to periodicals; published his first works, 1756; made the acquaintance of Johnson; took to politics; was appointed secretary to Lord Rockingham, 1765; became M.P. for Wendover, 1766; opposed the Grafton ministry, 1769-70; spoke against the taxation of the American colonies, 1774-7; misunderstood by his party and the nation; lost his seat at Bristol, 1780; obtained office as Paymaster-General in the Rockingham ministry, 1782; led the impeachment of Warren Hastings, 1788; opposed the French Revolution, 1790; was awarded a pension, 1795.

He never obtained the high office to which his services and gifts entitled him; he was the brain of the Whig party, and gave their principles a philosophical basis; a great admirer of the English constitution, with its ideal of ordered liberty; a man of great intellectual and imaginative power; highly admired and respected by Johnson (see Boswell's *Life*); an orator whose rhetoric was the clothing of sound political wisdom and sagacity: e.g. his advocacy of party government, of conciliation with America, of justice in India, of continuity in institutions; a prose-writer of great power, lucidity, wealth of illustration, and Celtic richness of imagination.

His chief writings are:—*Vindication of Natural Society*, 1756—a refutation of Bolingbroke's theory of the patriot king; *Inquiry into the Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1756—an attempt to formulate a theory of aesthetics, imperfect, but opened the way for Lessing's *Laocoön*; *Observations on the Present State of the Nation*, 1769; *Thoughts on Present Discontents*, 1770—one of his wisest works, of much more than temporary value for its exposition of sound principles of political practice; *Speech on American Taxation*, 1774, and *Speech on Conciliation with America*, 1775—contain his most stimulating thought on the fundamentals of British liberty—closely reasoned, eloquent,

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

impassioned; *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, 1777, on the same theme; *Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, 1785,—as eloquent as anything he ever did, better than his unfair tirade against Warren Hastings; *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790—a book which changed the current of English opinion; an able argument against methods of violence: a remarkable prophecy; expressed the stand-point of the traditional conservative, with its practical sense and love of established order; showed no sentiment for democracy and a distrust of popular movements; yet still valuable as a repository of sound maxims of government; *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, 1791; *Thoughts on French Affairs*, 1791; *Letter to a Noble Lord*, 1796—to the Duke of Bedford who had opposed his pension, a scathing and overwhelming retort; *Thoughts on a Regicide Peace*, 1797—a violent and passionate swan-song on French affairs.

**Political Writers.** Burke's *Reflections* was a reply to a sermon *On the Love of Country*, by Richard Price (1723–91), a revolutionary Unitarian minister; John Horne Tooke (1736–1812) was another radical writer of considerable influence and some scholarship; Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), famous as the discoverer of oxygen, 1774, a theological writer on the Unitarian side, supported the revolution in *Letters to Burke*, 1791; his laboratory at Birmingham was destroyed by the mob, and he fled to America; Sir James Mackintosh (1765–1832) replied to Burke in *Vindiciae Galliae*, 1791, but changed sides later; in parliament he supported the movements for reform and Catholic emancipation; and was a wide student of law and metaphysics, but a hazy writer, too much given to generalities. The political writings of Godwin and Tom Paine (p. 188) also sprang from the Revolution.

Arthur Young (1741–1820): an experimental farmer, and a chatty, interesting writer; threw much light on the condition of France, social and economic, by his *Travels in France during 1787, 1788 and 1789*, the book of a thoughtful observer; his *Tour in Ireland*, 1780, is almost as good.

“Junius”: the *nom de guerre* of the writer of a set of political letters which appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, 1769–72; attacked the King's Friends with a good deal of vigour and personal scurrility; the Letters have none of Burke's political wisdom; their flashy glitter of style does not wear well; the chief interest now centres in the identity of Junius; he was possibly Sir Philip Francis (1740–1818), a government official; Burke, Chatham, Portland, Chesterfield, Horne Tooke, Tom Paine, etc., have had the honour thrust upon them; he must have been in the inner circle of politicians; and his violence of invective suggests a man with a grievance; but the secret is still hidden.

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## II. PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, SCIENCE

**David Hume** (1711-76) : born in Edinburgh ; largely self-educated ; lived in France, 1734-7 ; published his first philosophical work, 1737 ; was attached to a British mission to Turin, 1744 ; became librarian of the faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh, 1752 ; completed his work in philosophy, 1757 ; wrote his *History of England*, 1754-63 ; obtained a post in the British Embassy at Paris, 1763 ; compiled a too brief autobiography ; and died in Edinburgh, 1776—at once respected and feared.

Hume holds a high place in the history of thought ; developed the philosophy of Berkeley to its logical issue—complete scepticism ; showed the hopelessness of the aims of metaphysics ; distinguished between the knowable and unknowable ; was content to study the sequence of phenomena, i.e. the “laws” of nature as understood by modern science ; an agnostic in religion ; demanded strong evidence for the truth of miracles ; an acute reasoner, with a dry clear style ; the study of his writings an intellectual pleasure ; his *History* vivid and readable, especially full and careful in the Stuart period ; dealt with the whole life of the period, but did not conceal his monarchic prejudices ; his *Autobiography* reveals a modest, agreeable, slightly cynical personality, serene and contented, an intellectual aristocrat.

His chief works in philosophy are :—*Treatise on Human Nature*, 1737 ; *Essays Moral and Political*, 1742 ; *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, 1748 ; *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, 1751 ; *Political Discourses*, 1752 ; *Natural History of Religion*, 1757.

**Thomas Reid** (1710-96) : professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen, obtained an important following as the exponent of common sense in philosophy ; his inquiry on the *Principles of Common Sense*, 1764, has not Hume’s subtlety of thought or attractiveness of style ; but it had an important influence in Scotland.

**David Hartley** (1705-57) : in *Observations on Man*, 1748, attempted with insufficient knowledge to find a physiological basis for psychology.

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**Adam Smith** (1723-90) : imperfectly educated at Oxford ; gave lectures on literature at Edinburgh ; was professor of logic, 1750, and of moral philosophy, 1752, at Glasgow ; published *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1759—highly praised by Burke—a stimulating and valuable book ; travelled abroad as tutor to the Duke of Buccleuch, 1764-6 ; met Voltaire and the French economists ; after twelve years' work brought out *The Wealth of Nations*, 1776 : an epoch-making book ; owing much to Montesquieu and Turgot, but original ; made political economy a science, but did not invent it ; expounded the laws of man's economic inter-relations ; advocated full freedom of trade ; its conclusions influenced Pitt and later statesmen in practical matters ; the starting point for all subsequent work in economics ; not a gospel, but a stimulating and practical treatise.

**Theology.** Mainly controversial, and added nothing to literature proper ; **William Paley** (1743-1805) obtained great reputation with *Evidences of Christianity*, 1794, an attempt in clear, incisive and logical language to expound to deists the reasonableness of Christianity ; *Horæ Paulinæ*, 1792, and *Natural Theology*, 1802, are similar appeals to a mechanical common sense

**Science.** Much pioneer work was done ; very little of literary value ; **Joseph Black** (1728-99) recorded his important work on the air and on heat ; **Henry Cavendish** (1731-1810) analyzed the air, 1781, and elucidated the true nature of water ; **John Dalton** (1766-1844) expounded the new atomic theory, 1808 ; **James Hutton** (1726-97) laid the foundation of modern physical geology in his *Theory of the Earth*, 1785.

**Gilbert White** (1720-93) : lived most of his life at Selborne, Hants and was curate there, 1747-93 ; published the *Natural History of Selborne*, 1789 ; in the form of letters to Thomas Pennant, a well-known zoologist (44), and the Hon. Daines Barrington (26) ; a charming book revealing a delightful man ; in unaffected style ; merely the notes of a lifetime of observation ; patient, faithful, acute ; has not the pretensions of a treatise ; but is one of the most cherished books of the nature-lover.

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## III. MISCELLANEOUS

**Horace Walpole** (1717-97) : youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole ; educated at Eton and Cambridge ; made a tour of France and Italy with Gray, 1737-8 ; became M.P. and enjoyed several lucrative sinecures ; lived at Strawberry Hill a dilettante life, cultivating his amateurish tastes in arts and letters ; in no sense a great man, but clever and entertaining ; will be remembered for his *Correspondence*, 1741-86, with Sir Horace Mann—a brilliant picture of life, society, and opinions during his day ; witty, interesting, gay ; easy in style, but affected in manner ; self-conscious, and hence very different from Cowper's *Letters* ; wrote also some lively and entertaining memoirs ; *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764, the first romantic novel, false in sentiment and ridiculous in its accessories ; and a clever historical book, throwing doubt on the facts of the reign of Richard II ; altogether, a man of his day, rarely dull, but never elevating.

**Thomas Warton** (1728-90) : professor of poetry at Oxford, 1757 ; Poet Laureate, 1785 ; a poor poet, but a good critic and enthusiast for poetry ; wrote *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, 1754 ; and a *History of English Poetry*, 1774-81—the first attempt to take a comprehensive view of poetry ; full of learning and acute criticism ; while giving suitable praise to the classical school, he had wider sympathies, which make the book one of the earliest elements making for the romantic revival. His brother, **Joseph Warton** (1722-1800) belonged to the more pedantic and "correct" school ; yet even he, in his *Essay on the Writings of Pope*, Vol. I, 1756, II, 1782, recognized the claims of imagination, as well as those of common sense.

**Sir Joshua Reynolds** (1723-92) : the famous painter ; president of the Royal Academy, 1759-90 ; issued his presidential addresses, which are full of practical hints and sound criticism, eloquently expressed.

**Sir William Blackstone** (1723-80) : author of *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 1765-9 ; a learned, acute, and well-written book ; one of our most popular legal works

## E. Poetry

### I. TRANSITION TO NATURALISM

The middle of the century lacked a definite poetic direction ; the example of Pope was still powerful : e.g. in Johnson and Goldsmith ; a few men however sang in their own music ; and Thomson was not forgotten.

**Thomas Gray** (1716-71) : son of a London scrivener ; educated at Eton and Cambridge ; spent

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most of his life in scholarly retirement at Cambridge, except for a journey abroad with Horace Walpole and occasional visits to various parts of Britain ; became one of the most learned men of his time ; knew well all the literatures of Europe ; had a real interest in art and antiquities ; was one of the first to realize the possibilities of Norse and Welsh literature ; planned a history of English poetry, but handed his notes over to Warton ; wrote too little ; was in himself shy, reserved, indifferent to fame—"never spoke out" ; a fastidious artist ; his verses perfected in form by prolonged study ; yet the work of a true poet with a real feeling for nature, sincere emotion and lyrical feeling, tempered by a Hellenic sense of the importance of a pure and chaste form. His early *Odes* were published, 1747 ; the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, 1751 ; the *Pindaric Odes*, 1757 ; his collected *Poems*, 1768, include also *The Descent of Odin* and *The Fatal Sisters*, imitations from the Norse ; his *Life* was written by William Mason (1724-97), in 1774, with a number of his *Letters* which are among the most graceful and charming in the language.

**The Elegy** : inspired by the village churchyard of Stoke Poges ; his most popular poem ; deservedly so, for its monumental expression of thoughts and feelings common to all humanity ; the seven years' labour spent on it justified by the perfection and finality of its language.

**The Pindaric Odes** : *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poesy* ; probably the best of their kind in English ; stately, polished, sculpturesque ; the qualities not simply poetical ; splendid rhetoric ; laborious splendour of diction ; impressive ; too difficult for lyric poems.

**Minor Odes** : On a Distant Prospect of Eton College ; On Spring ; To Adversity ; On the Pleasures Arising from Vicissitude : have Gray's faults and virtues ; too much restraint, excess of personification, coldness : insight into nature and real if subdued interest in the deeper feelings of men.

**Light Verse** : the *Long Story*, 1750 ; Ode on a Favourite Cat ; show a pleasant sense of humour which it is a pity he did not cultivate more.

**Norse Odes** : failures as poems, but valuable indirectly.

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**Letters** : here the real man appears : the accomplished scholar, the sympathetic critic, the sad humorist, the recluse shyly looking out on the world, the graceful writer of prose ; his friendship with Horace Walpole creditable to both.

**William Collins** (1721-59) : born at Chichester ; educated at Winchester and Oxford ; wrote the dreamy *Persian Eclogues* while still an undergraduate, 1742 ; came to London and made the acquaintance of Thomson ; published *Odes*, 1746, which received no recognition ; became a prey to indolence and melancholia, ending in insanity ; wrote a few more poems, and died forgotten ; a pathetic personality ; a lyric poet of exceptional sweetness ; isolated and unappreciated ; now recognized as the purest lyrist of the century till Burns and Blake came ; the *Persian Eclogues* have a hint of 'Romance.'

His chief *Odes* are those on the *Passions*—a magnificent burst of music ; to *Evening*, with a haunting melancholy music ; on *Liberty*, with a splendid prelude ; on *Simplicity* ; on *Pity* ; on *Fear* ; on the *Death of Mr. Thomson*, a fine elegy ; on the *Popular Superstitions of the Highlands*, a worthy precursor of Burns' popular poetry ; the *Dirge for Cymbeline* ; and the perfect gem, "How sleep the Brave." His faults are excess of personification and deficiency of human interest ; his merits sincerity and music : few poets in any tongue are so essentially musical or have control over so many instruments.

**Christopher Smart** (1722-71) : a hack writer in London who became insane, and while confined in an asylum wrote the *Song of David*, 1763, a magnificent outburst of religious feeling, sincere and mystical ; was apparently a victim to religious mania ; and wrote hymns and metrical versions of the *Psalms of David* : poor efforts, in comparison with his one great poem.

**The School of Pope.** The heir to Pope's satirical position was **Charles Churchill** (1731-64), a clergyman from 1758, who made his reputation, after some failures, with *The Rosciad*, 1761—a satire on contemporary actors ; after this, continued to write prolifically and produced *Night*, 1762 ; the *Prophecy of Famine*, 1763 ; *Epistle to Hogarth*, 1763 ; *The Ghost*, 1763 ; *Golhain*, 1764 ; and much other work ; was a friend of Wilkes ; disliked by Johnson whom he satirized in *The Ghost* ; admired by Cowper ; wrote fluently in heroic couplets and octosyllabics ; coarse and violent ; his fame sank almost as rapidly as it rose. His mantle fell to **John Wolcot** ('Peter Pindar' : 1738-1819), as vigorous and almost as coarse, but in better temper ; his

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burlesque epic, the *Lousiad*, 1786, is one of a series of biting and persistent satires against George III.

**Erasmus Darwin** (1731–1802) : a physician of Lichfield and able naturalist ; wrote in heroic couplets *The Botanic Garden*, 1789–92 ; in which he anticipated some of the ideas of his grandson, Charles Darwin ; the poem has a few fine passages, but the subject was incongruous, and impossible.

## II. NATURALISM AND ROMANCE

**William Cowper** (1731–1800) : son of the rector of Berkhamstead, and a connexion of Earl Cowper ; educated at a private school and at Westminster ; his bitter experiences reflected in *Tirocinium*, 1785—a plea for home education ; prepared for the Law, 1749–51 ; came to London, 1749 ; formed with Churchill and others the Nonsense Club, 1751 ; lived the life of a man of fashion, for some years, writing occasional trivial verses ; was attacked by insanity, 1763–5 ; became morbidly introspective and religious, often contemplating suicide ; settled at Huntingdon with Mr. and Mrs. Unwin, 1766 ; moved to Olney with Mrs. Unwin on her husband's death, 1768 ; came under the influence of Mr. Newton, a gloomy religious fanatic ; moved to Weston Underwood, 1786 ; occupied himself with a new translation of Homer ; was again attacked by madness, 1793 ; after the death of Mrs. Unwin, 1796, his attacks more frequent and prolonged ; wrote occasionally in his lucid intervals, but gradually sank under the weight of his melancholia, and died at Dereham, 1800. A man of singular personal charm ; simple, sincere, affectionate ; with a bright and gay humour ; a lover of nature and animals ; sympathetic and sensitive to the simple, homely joys and sorrows ; a hater of slavery and every aspect of "man's inhumanity to man" ; a good critic, with a full knowledge of poetry ; his intellect overshadowed by religious fears ; had the Methodist sense of personal wickedness and sin ; the poet of evangelicalism ; his service to poetry the breach with the tradition and manner of Pope ; freedom from affectation and insincerity ; enlargement of the range of the poet's interests ; as a nature-poet, a transition from Thomson to Wordsworth ; not a

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revolutionary, but a forerunner of the romantic revolt ; a patriot, with advanced views on humanitarian subjects.

**Works.** *Olney Hymns*, 1779 ; *Didactic Poems*, 1782 ; *John Gilpin*, 1782 ; *The Task*, 1785 ; translation of the *Iliad*, 1791 ; many short poems, and *Letters*.

**Olney Hymns** : sincere piety ; severe tone of most ; some really beautiful, and universal favourites, e.g. "O, for a closer walk with God" ; "God moves in a mysterious way" ; etc.

**Didactic Poems** : suggested by Mrs. Unwin to occupy his mind ; in heroic couplets which show already a loosening of Pope's influence ; moral satires,—earnest, but lacking in knowledge of the real world ; the work of an ascetic evangelical cut off from the life he condemned ; subjects treated : The Progress of Error ; Truth ; Table Talk ; Expostulation ; Hope ; Charity ; Conversation ; Retirement, not well-received ; contained the new method in embryo.

**The Task** : a long poem in Miltonic blank verse ; aimed at Milton's sublimity and at times came near to it ; a definite break with Pope in manner and matter ; a miscellany of natural descriptions, human incidents, moral reflections, religious fervour ; simple and direct in sentiment and expression ; popular for its dignified treatment of homely themes, for its faithfulness and tenderness, its bursts of indignation over wrong in public policy and conduct ; in six books : (i) the Sofa ; (ii) the Timepiece ; (iii) the Garden ; (iv) the Winter Evening ; (v) the Winter Morning Walk ; (vi) the Winter Walk at Noon.

**Shorter Poems** : many of these of high merit ; his gift of light verse triumphant in *John Gilpin* ; his lyric gift and control of metres varied : e.g. "Toll for the Barge" ; *Boadicea* ; the "Solitude of Alexander Selkirk" ; the beautiful lines "To Mary," and the sonnet to her—one of our best ; *The Castaway*, 1799, a terrible picture of his loneliness and despair near the moment of death. We ought not to omit the tender *Lines on His Mother's Picture*, 1790 ; the lines on *Heroism* ; *Yardley Oak* ; or a number of others, which combine to display his varied lyrical faculty and the new personal note that he brought into poetry.

**Letters** : never intended to be seen except by their recipients ; unaffected and artless ; with a natural grace of style and fancy ; would be humdrum but for the light of the writer's personality which gleams through them : winning and humorous, as in the letters to Lady Hesketh and Hill ; serious but not gloomy, as in those to William Unwin ; overcast with his religious struggles, as in those to Newton ; altogether an intimate revelation of the heart of a lovable and sincere man.

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**Thomas Chatterton** (1752-70) : the "wonderful boy"; son of a Bristol schoolmaster; had a precocious taste for poetry, antiquities, heraldry; early acquired the faculty of verse; conceived and carried out *Rowley Poems*, 1765-8; sent them to Horace Walpole who was at first deceived, but returned them; came to London, 1770, and unable to make way was reduced to poverty and committed suicide by poison.

**The Rowley Poems** : published, 1777; a cycle of poems in a special ten-line stanza; designed to bear upon the Norman Conquest; written in a pseudo-mediæval jargon, and claimed to be the work of one "Thomas Rowlie," in the fifteenth century; this claim undoubtedly false; as forgeries they are clumsy; as original work remarkable, showing real lyrical spirit and metrical skill; through them Chatterton is a pioneer of romance in modern poetry, and was a real influence on Coleridge and Blake; the *Song to Ælla* is probably the best of the poems.

The *Excelente Balade of Charitie*, written during his proud struggle in London, is surely one of the greatest youthful poems in literature.

**William Blake** (1757-1827) : born and lived most of his life in London; an engraver and painter, as well as poet; a religious and visionary mystic; most of his works of a confused prophetic type; three slender volumes contain his real contribution to literature: *Poetical Sketches*, 1783; *Songs of Innocence*, 1789; *Songs of Experience*, 1794; the two last printed with designs illuminated and engraved by himself; a pure lyrist, owning the inspiration of the Elizabethans; artless and simple, but inevitable and beautiful, in diction; the imagination as direct and pure as a child's; in this respect he "never grew up"; in his later prophetic books the artistic element came to dominate the poetic: they are difficult to interpret, lost in a blaze of rapture; but his lyrics a true foretaste of the nineteenth century lyric.

**Songs of Innocence** : 20 poems of singular beauty and purity; including "Piping down the valleys wild"; *The Lamb*; *Night*; *Holy Thursday*; *The Chimney Sweeper*; *Infant Joy*; *A Dream*.

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**Songs of Experience** : at least equal to the former ; include " Ah Sunflower, weary of Time " ; *The Tiger* ; *London* ; *The Angel*.

**Robert Burns** (1759-96) : born at Alloway, Ayrshire ; the son of a small farmer, whose sturdy character and homely life he pictured in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* ; not badly educated ; worked on the farm at Lochlie, 1777 ; commenced his course of drinking and love-making ; on his father's death, 1784, joined his brother in a farm at Mossiel ; wrote many of his best poems there ; published the Kilmarnock edition of his *Poems*, 1786 ; was " taken up " in Edinburgh ; received no good influence and did no good work on his visit ; was married to Jean Armour, 1788—a good wife in spite of his frequent unfaithfulness ; took a farm at Ellisland, Nithsdale, 1788, but made no success of it ; became an exciseman at Dumfries, 1791 ; wrote many of his best *Songs* during this period, for Johnson's *Musical Museum* ; hastened his end by his reckless living ; a man of strong passions and full blood, but little self-control ; had he been otherwise we should not have had his poems.

One of the greatest lyric poets of the world ; not meditative or ideal ; a master of passion ; a singer of love in all its aspects : tender, humorous, sad, rapturous, naive, self-forgetting ; personal and sincere, true to the mood of the moment ; never calmly analytic or artificial or philosophic ; his imagery vivid and from the very spring of his nature ; keen in satire, especially of hypocrisy ; sympathetic to human frailties ; realized the true equality of man ; boasted of poverty and flouted the " unco guid " of the middle-class ; loved nature and rendered it pictorially ; united nature with his own moods, but did not make a religion or philosophy of her ; a poet of Scotland, owing much to Fergusson, the national ballads and stories, and the widespread appreciation of song among the Scottish peasantry ; his lyrics nevertheless of universal appeal ; his sense of melody accompanied by an equally keen sense of humour.

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**Songs** : Among these only a few can be named to illustrate his varied powers : *Mary Morison* ; *To Mary in Heaven* ; *Ae Fond Kiss* ; *Ye Banks and Braes* ; *John Anderson, my jo* ; *Auld Lang Syne* ; *Comin' thro' the Rye* ; *Bonnie Jean* ; *My Nanie O* ; "O wert thou in the Cauld Blast."

**Satiric Poems** : *The Holy Fair* ; *Holy Willie's Prayer* ; *To the Unco Guid*.

**Poems of Man** : *The Twa Dogs* ; *A man's a man for a' that*.

**National Poems** : *The Cotter's Saturday Night*—an ambitious poem describing his home life ; *Hallowe'en*—a delightful glimpse of common customs ; *The Jolly Beggars*—a roystering and brilliant picture of low life ; *Tam o' Shanter*—a vivid tale of a legendary worthy of Ayr ; *Scots Wha Hae* ; *The Brigs of Ayr* ; and in his other poems *passim*.

**Nature** : always present in association with his feelings ; *The Birks o' Aberfeldy* ; *To a Mouse* ; *To a Mountain Daisy* ; but few nature poems written for their own sake.

**Humour** : grim or broad, as in the *Address to the De'il* ; genial or playful, as in *Duncan Gray's Wooing* or *Captain Grose's Peregrinations*.

**Robert Fergusson** (1750-74) : a lawyer's clerk and a gay "spark" of Edinburgh ; the real precursor of Burns who delighted to honour him ; carried on the tradition of Scottish song and folk-poem ; showed vivacity, humour and descriptive power ; anticipated Burns in the metre of *To a Mouse* and in several poems ; may be remembered for *Daft Days*, *Leith Races*, *Auld Reekie*, *Ode to a Gowdspink* ; but he died in a madhouse, still a poet of promise only.

**James Macpherson** (1736-96) : a Highland schoolmaster, well read in history and the classics ; travelled widely in the Western Highlands and the Hebrides, where he obtained the material for his 'translations' in the oral traditions of the natives ; issued fragments of rude Gaelic verse, 1760 ; *Fingal*, an epic in six books, 1762 ; *Temora*, in eight books, and other poems, 1763 ; set forward his work as English prose translations of Gaelic poems by the third-century bard, Ossian ; charged with fraud by Johnson and others ; could not produce his originals ; his prose shows traces of the Bible and Homer ; tumid and monotonous, yet often touched with the subtle beauty and natural magic, the

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melancholy and chivalry of the Gaels ; this obtained from his original sources, the oral debris of Goidelic culture-myths.

Authentic or not, *Ossian* awakened the Celtic spirit anew ; powerfully affected the early stages of the romantic movement in Europe, and great minds like Goethe's and Napoleon's.

**Alexander Ross** (1699–1784) for *Helenore*, 1768 ; **William Julius Mickle** (1735–88) for the fine ballad of *Cumnor Hall* ; **Jane Elliott** (1727–1805) for the beautiful *Flowers of the Forest* ; **Lady Anne Lindsay** (1750–1825) for *Auld Robin Gray* ; **Lady Nairn** (1766–1845) for *The Land o' the Leal* and *Caller Herrin'* ; and **John Skinner** (1721–1801) for *Tullochgorum*—all deserve notice to illustrate the wide prevalence of true poetic faculty in Scotland.

**James Beattie** (1735–1803) : professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen owed his inspiration to Spenser, Gray and Collins ; wrote much ; *The Minstrel*, 1770, 1774, is a long desultory poem, in smooth Spenserian stanzas, with vague sentiment and a sensitive feeling for nature, faintly foreshadowing Wordsworth.

**George Crabbe** (1754–1832) : born at Aldeburgh, Suffolk ; practised as a surgeon unsuccessfully ; went to London penniless, 1780 ; failed to get patronage for his verses ; was taken up by Burke, 1781, under whose influence *The Library* was published ; published *The Village*, 1783, with touches by Johnson ; became chaplain to the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir, 1784 ; received the livings of Muston and Allington ; not successful as a parish priest ; his interest in botany and psychology, rather than preaching ; returned to Parham, 1792 ; wrote little between 1785 and 1805 ; went back to Muston, 1805 ; vicar of Trowbridge, 1814 ; visited Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, 1822 ; died, full of honour and respect, 1832.

Much difference of opinion about his genius ; a realist occupied mainly with the sad and sordid side of life ; a psychologist with a deep insight into human motives and passions ; a vivid and impressive tale-teller ; used the heroic couplet with freedom ; broke from Pope in his sincerity and severe fidelity to truth ; descriptions often of great intensity and power ; prolix and prosaic frequently ; had little sense of artistic

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fitness in choice of theme ; narrow in range ; middle-class in sentiment ; lacking in inspiring force, in lofty vision ; a genre-painter, intimately acquainted with the life of the poor ; within his limits achieved permanent success.

His chief works are : *The Library*, 1781 ; *The Village*, 1783, for the first time found his real bent : vivid realistic painting of the tragical side of village life : in every way a contrast with Goldsmith's poem : lacking its genial optimism and sunshine, but also its artificiality ; *The Newspaper*, 1785, mild didactic satire : less original and individual ; *The Parish Register*, 1807, tales, tragic and unpleasant, drawn from the entries in the parish register ; *The Borough*, 1810, continuing the method of *The Village* with stories from the life of a country town : dramatic : but often harsh and unpoetic ; *Tales*, 1812, an exceptionally good volume : well-told tales : full of true pathos and subtle characterization ; *Tales of the Hall*, 1819—less successful. Only his lack of relief and humour makes him inferior to Chaucer as a narrative poet ; the Hogarth of poetry.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

#### A. General Characteristics

**Aspects of Romance.** By the romantic movement, we mean the revolt against the ideals of taste and style current in the eighteenth century ; a protest against the extreme classicism of the age of Pope and the age of Racine. It took many forms : (i) an interest in mediæval things ; (ii) a more inspiring treatment of nature ; (iii) a sane treatment of the supernatural ; (iv) an impulse towards greater variety in themes and in metres ; (v) a definite opposition to classical conventions ; (vi) a greater freedom and boldness of thought ; (vii) a more individual and personal note in literature ; (viii) sentimentalism ; (ix) a love of colour and sensuous effects generally ; finally degenerating into mere caprice, eccentricity, cynicism, search for "effect."

**Origins.** The romantic note audible in Gray and Collins ; comes out plainly in Macpherson's *Ossian* (1762-3), with its vague yearnings ; in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765), with its revived interest in mediæval ballads ; and in **Jean Jacques Rousseau** (1712-78), whose attitude towards nature, politics and sentiment is the very essence of romance, and whose morbid introspective *Confessions* introduce the interest in one's own personality which appears in the intense *lyrisme* of so many romantic writers. The poems of Cowper, Crabbe, Burns, and Blake prepared the way for the English poets of the movement.

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(a) **Germany**: The romantic movement patriotic ; its aim to establish a German literature and a German nationality ; fusion of romance with hellenism in its best writers : e.g. **Lessing** (1729-81)—*Minna von Barnhelm*, 1762 ; *Laokoon*, 1766 ; **Schiller** (1759-1805), romantic pure and simple in *Die Rauber*, 1781 ; but not in *Die Braut von Messina*, 1803 ; *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, 1802 ; *Wilhelm Tell*, 1804 : **Goethe** (1749-1832), romantic in *Götz von Berlichingen*, 1773 ; *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, 1774 ; and *Faust*, I, 1808 ; but never forgetful of the sense of form, as in *Iphigenie*, 1786 ; *Hermann und Dorothea* 1797 ; equally great in lyric, ballad, and criticism ; a man of all-round culture ; one of the great names of world-literature. The influence of Percy and Rousseau is seen in **Herder** (1741-1803), a sane and scholarly romantic ; **Burger's Lenore** (1774) is the first great ballad of the German school ; later **Wilhelm Schlegel** (1767-1845) translated Shakespeare and Calderon ; **Friedrich Schlegel** (1772-1829) opened the treasures of India and wrote much valuable criticism from the romantic standpoint ; **Tieck** (1773-1853) in novel, lyric, and drama worked constantly to the same end ; **Richter** (1762-1825) and **Novalis** (1772-1801) had merits which appealed powerfully to Carlyle. Finally, **Kant** (1724-1804), **Fichte** (1762-1814), **Schelling** (1775-1854) and **Hegel** (1770-1831) made a revolution in philosophy, which gave indirect support to the spiritual side of the movement .

(b) **France**: The movement more definitely literary than elsewhere ; *De L'Allemagne*, 1810-13, by **Madame de Staël** (1766-1817), showed Frenchmen that France was not necessarily the centre of taste in literature ; **Chateaubriand** (1768-1848) emphasized a sentimental naturalism and a monarchic catholicism in *Atala*, 1801, and *Le Génie du Christianisme*, 1802 ; **André Chénier** (1762-94) and **Lamartine** (1790-1869) wrote in classical forms but new spirit. But romanticism became conscious and deliberate in **Victor Hugo** (1802-85), great in lyrics (*Odes*, 1826 ; etc.), in drama, and in prose romance (*Notre Dame de Paris*, 1831, etc.) ; *Cromwell*, 1828, and *Hernani*, 1830, were the dramas which won the victory for the romantic Shakespearean method against the classic Corneille and Racine. **Alfred de Musset** (1810-57) and **Theophile Gautier** (1807-72) were two of the finest lyric poets of Europe. Criticism found a master in **Sainte-Beuve** (1804-69), who instituted the true classical method represented in England by Matthew Arnold. **Alexandre Dumas** (1803-70), as well as Hugo, followed the example of Scott.

The net result of the romantic movement, tempered by a genuine respect for the classical writers, is seen in the wonderful fertility and variety of the literature of the nineteenth century.

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## B. The Wordsworth Group

### I. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

(a) **Life** : Son of a clergyman ; born at Ottery St. Mary, Devon, 1772 ; at Christ's Hospital, 1782-90—a precocious but eccentric boy, deeply interested in theology, metaphysics, poetry ; a Unitarian and a Jacobin ; at Cambridge, 1791-4 ; joined Southey at Oxford, and wrote with him *The Fall of Robespierre*, a tragedy, 1794 ; indulged his passion for liberty in verses and articles ; made acquaintance with the great philosophers, including Kant ; married Sara Fricker, and first met Wordsworth, 1795 ; went to live at Stowey, not far from Wordsworth, 1796 ; joined him in the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798 ; visited Germany, 1798 ; returned an enthusiast for German philosophy and literature ; translated Schiller's *Wallenstein*, 1799-1800 ; wrote *Christabel* (unfinished), 1797-1800, and *Dejection : an Ode*, 1802, and only a few snatches of poetry afterwards ; contributed to the *Morning Post*, 1799-1802 ; went to live at Greta Hall, Keswick, 1802 ; about this time took to opium, and was its slave to the end, much to the detriment of his literary work ; visited Malta, 1804-6 ; in trouble with his health, with finance, and with his wife ; wrote for the *Courier*, 1807-11 ; met De Quincey ; lectured in London on the Fine Arts, 1808-9 ; returned to the Lakes, 1809 ; edited *The Friend*, 1809-10—a failure ; returned to London, lectured on Shakespeare etc., but became more embarrassed than ever ; became the guest of Mr. Gillman at Highgate, 1816 ; published various prose works, including *Biographia Literaria*, 1817 ; lectured again on Shakespeare, 1818 ; devoted himself to metaphysics and theology, but wrote little and survived as the "oracle of Highgate" till 1834. Some of his opinions and conversations were collected after his death and published in various volumes, including *Table Talk*, 1835.

(b) **Works** : (i) **Poetry**. Before 1798, Coleridge had published a number of his minor poems, including four worthy of

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memory : the *Ode to the Departing Year*, 1796 ; *France : an Ode, Fears in Solitude, Frost at Midnight*, 1798 ; also *Religious Musings*, 1794-6, *Lewti*, 1794 ; *The Eolian Harp*, 1795 ; and *This Lime Tree Bower*, 1797.

**The Rime of the Ancient Mariner**, the chief poem of the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798 ; is the most characteristic of romantic poems in England ; has all the elements of "romance"—the air of mystery, the eerie supernaturalism, the intense subjectivity, the fine painting of passion, the heightened but simple and sensuous style.

**Love** (in 2nd edn. *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800) is simpler in effect and more of a ballad ; but has the same magic of style.

**Christabel** : published 1816 (written : Part I, 1797 ; II, 1800), another poem of the supernatural, even more skilful in its art of suggesting magic through natural means ; the ballad metre used with a new power and marvellous subtlety.

**Kubla Khan**, 1816 (written 1797), is a short dream-poem, a marvellous fragment of suggestive word-melody.

**Dejection : an Ode**, 1802, the most pathetic of his poems, expressing with a grand mournfulness the feeling of powers unequal to the ideas that called for them.

**Minor Poems and Fragments.** Many of Coleridge's minor poems contain gleams of his characteristic poetic light, without being satisfactory as wholes: e.g. *The Nightingale*, c. 1799 ; *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*, 1802 ; *Youth and Age*, c. 1822-32 ; and such short snatches as *The Knight's Tomb*, ? 1817 ; *Work without Hope*, 1827. *The Ballad of the Dark Ladie*, 1798 ; and *The Three Graves*, ? are, disappointingly, fragments.

(ii) **Prose.** Very small in amount, considering his powers ; the best is the literary criticism of the *Biographia Literaria* ; stimulating and imaginative ; subtle, original, philosophical ; owed something to the Germans, but his own poetic mind was his chief guide. His talk distinguished by eloquence ; showed a rich intellect, great in snatches and in power of analysis, but incapable of a sustained work.

(c) **Influence:** Pioneer of romanticism in poetry ; set poetic example for later apostles of beauty such as Keats ; with Wordsworth overthrew the dominance of the narrow classical school ; by a different road he returned to Nature ; helped to make critical work creative—appreciative, not merely destructive ; through his philosophy inspired the Broad-church school ; his constant fight with materialism created the spiritual atmosphere for the Oxford movement also ; held in high veneration

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by most of his contemporaries, but satirized by Carlyle (*Life of Sterling*).

(d) **Appreciations**: He is the only person I ever knew who answered to the idea of a man of genius.—HAZLITT.

The rapt one, of the godlike forehead.—WORDSWORTH.

No man has all the resources of poetry in such abundance.—SCOTT.

A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,

A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—SHELLEY.

He had knowledge about many things and topics, much curious reading ; but generally all topics led him, after a pass or two, into the high seas of theosophic philosophy, the hazy infinitude of Kantean transcendentalism.—CARLYLE.

## II. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

(a) **Life**: Born at Cockermouth, 1770 ; spent his early life amid the Cumbrian fells and valleys ; educated at Hawkshead Grammar School ; at Cambridge, 1787-91, where he made no mark ; made a tour of France and Switzerland, 1790 ; went to London and began to write, 1791 ; supported the French Revolution, went to Paris and was friendly with the Girondins, 1792 ; returned to England in time to escape the guillotine, 1792 ; became a disciple of Godwin, whose influence appears in *Guilt and Sorrow*, 1793-5 ; wrote *The Borderers*, a moving tragedy, 1795-6 ; went to live in Dorset with his sister Dorothy, 1795 ; repelled by the Terror and Napoleon, lost faith in the Revolution ; became acquainted with Coleridge, 1795 ; went to live at Alfoxden, near Coleridge at Stowey, 1797 ; joined him in the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798 ; visited Germany with him, but gained nothing from it, 1798 ; retired to Grasmere, 1799 ; married Mary Hutchinson, 1802 ; moved to Rydal Mount, 1813 ; apart from journeys to Scotland, and the Continent (1820, 1837), lived a peaceful and uneventful life of work and meditation ; appointed Poet Laureate, 1843 ; died, 1850.

(b) **Works**: *First Poems*, 1793 (including "Descriptive Sketches," "Lines left under a Yew Tree," "Guilt and Sorrow"); *The Borderers*, 1796 ; *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, (including "Lines written near Tintern Abbey," *The Idiot Boy*, *The Thorn*, *Goody*

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Blake, "We are Seven," "Lines in early Spring," etc.) ; Pastorals, 1800, (including *Margaret* and *Michael*) ; *The Leech-gatherer*, 1802 ; *The Prelude*, 1805 ; *The White Doe of Rylstone*, 1807 ; *Laodamia and Dion*, 1814 ; *The Excursion*, 1814 ; *Peter Bell*, 1817 ; the *Duddon Sonnets*, 1820 ; *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, 1821—and many other poems.

(c) **Characteristics :** (i) **A poet of Nature :** not merely descriptive, but moved by an almost religious instinct, a perception of the life immanent in all nature ; regarded Nature as the great inspirer and teacher, the chief formative influence on human character ; e.g. *The Prelude*, describing his own spiritual life ; *The Excursion* (*passim*) ; Tintern Abbey lines ; the Ode on Immortality, 1807 ; To a Highland girl at Inversnaid ; *Yew-trees* ; The Lucy Gray poems ; *The Fountain* ; *Expostulation and Reply* ; Sonnet on the Beach near Calais ; "The World is too much with us" ; *Peter Bell* ; *Ruth* ; etc.

(ii) **A poet of Man :** saw the heroic in common life ; lifted the labourer into romance, and made him the channel of his deepest moralizings ; found the pathos and the beauty of ordinary lives : e.g. *Michael* ; *The Affliction of Margaret* ; *Ruth* ; *The Leech-gatherer*, and many minor poems ; in particular he realized the significance of childhood and the simple affections : e.g. the *Immortality Ode* ; *Lucy Gray* ; "We are Seven."

(iii) **A poet of Freedom :** as seen in some of his noblest sonnets : e.g. "Two voices are there" ; "On the extinction of the Venetian Republic" ; To Milton ; To Toussaint l'Ouverture, etc. His patriotic poems (e.g. *The Happy Warrior*), inspired by the struggle against Napoleon. These poems intermediate between his revolutionary stage and the later period when he was the unbending champion of order.

(iv) **A poet of Romance :** the special romantic note not so powerful as in Coleridge ; in his writings Wordsworth was too often reflective, and rarely gave full rein to his imagination ; was not always in presence of the "light that never was on sea and land" (*Elegy on Peele Castle*) ; yet felt the glamour of events and places of the past—e.g. *The White Doe* ; *The Feast at Brougham Castle* ; *Hartleap Well* ; *Yarrow Revisited* ; *Yew-trees* ; it is his *Highland Reaper* who, like Ossian, sings of "old unhappy far-off things, And battles long ago."

(v) **He is a very unequal poet :** at his best among the very greatest, but often in long poems has left us heavy uninspired passages which are poor prose : e.g. *The Excursion* ; but there is not so much desert in *The Prelude* ; his best sonnets are equal to the best of any poet, but the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* are nearly all of a much lower order. He lacked humour and self-criticism ; consequently he exaggerated trivial incidents and did not always select poetic subjects.

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(d) **Influence:** The second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800, had a preface and apology for his methods; to him "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity"; the purpose of poetry "to teach the young and gracious of every age to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more securely and actively virtuous"; poetic diction should be the language of every day, carefully chosen to be equal to the passion expressed. His views were long unpopular and in their extreme form are untenable. His influence was not so powerful as Coleridge's, but deeper in the end. His attitude to Nature was in its essentials new; few modern poets have failed to be touched by it. He makes no strong human appeal; his personality appears frigid and repellent except to reflective minds.

(e) **Appreciations:** He has described all these objects in a way and with an intensity of feeling that no one else had done before him, and has given a new view or aspect of nature. He is in this sense the most original poet now living, and the one whose writings could the least be spared, for they have no substitute elsewhere.—HAZLITT.

He is one of the very chief glories of English poetry.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

No writer since Shakespeare has left us so true a picture of the British nation.—F. W. H. MYERS.

## III. OTHER POETS

**Robert Southey** (1774–1843): the third of the "Lake Poets," had little in common with them; educated at Westminster, and Oxford, 1792–4; was bitten by the revolutionary and romantic movements, which produced the immature *Wat Tyler*, 1793; his share is the *Fall of Robespierre*, 1794; and *Joan of Arc*, 1796 ("A Tom Paine in Petticoats"); visited Spain, 1795–6, and became acquainted with Oriental Romance; formed grandiose literary plans; wrote *Thalaba*, 1801, an "Epic of Islam" in irregular blank verse; went to live at Greta Hall, 1803; produced *Madoc*, 1805; *The Curse of Kehama*, 1810, a Hindu romance; and *Don Roderick*, 1814, a stirring narrative, but not great poetry; became a professional man of letters; was appointed Poet Laureate, 1813; produced a large bulk of miscellaneous prose and verse, including an excellent *Life of Nelson*, a *Life of Wesley*, and a *History of Brazil*, competent and reliable, but not critical or creative. The greater part of his work has not caught the imagination; but we may still remember his "Stanzas written in my Library," the "Battle of Blenheim" and the purple patches in *Thalaba* and *Roderick*.

**Thomas Campbell** (1777–1844): also loomed larger in his own day than in ours; wrote the *Pleasures of Hope*, 1798, a romantic

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poem in heroic couplets; *Gertrude of Wyoming*, 1809, in Spenserian stanzas, a romance modelled on Scott, but vague, dreamy, and tedious, though fluent and occasionally melodious; and other forgotten tales; is at his best in his patriotic songs (*Ye Mariners of England*, 1801; *Hohenlinden*, 1803; *The Battle of the Baltic*, 1809); and in familiar ballads such as *Lord Ullin's Daughter* and *The Soldier's Dream*.

**Samuel Rogers** (1763-1855): author of *The Pleasures of Memory*, 1792; *Jacqueline*, 1814; *Italy*, 1822; had a little of the romantic sentiment, but none of its poetic power; his poems lack an authentic originality, and he is remembered for his wit and social qualities, and for his friendship with Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Byron.

## C. Scott and His Followers

### I. SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

(a) **Life:** Son of an Edinburgh lawyer and writer to the Signet; was delicate in youth, and slightly lame through life; went to the High School, Edinburgh, 1778; to the University, 1783; was no scholar in the ordinary sense, but read deeply in poetry and romance; was apprenticed to the law, 1786; became an advocate, 1792; worked well in his profession, but his heart was not in it; made many journeys to the romantic parts of the Lowlands and the nearer Highlands, thus learning the legends of the people, 1792-8; had already been attracted by German romantic literature, translating Burger's *Lenore*, and other ballads, 1796, and Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, 1799; married, took a house in Edinburgh, but lived mostly at Lasswade, in Eskdale, 1798; issued the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802; became Sheriff of Selkirkshire; joined the Ballantynes' printing and publishing business, 1805; published *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805; became Clerk of Session at Edinburgh, 1806; made large sums by his poems; purchased Abbotsford, 1812, and proceeded to build up a large landed estate; published *Waverley*, the first of his novels, 1814; visited London and had a great welcome, 1815; devoted himself to fiction for the rest of his life, but also edited Swift and Dryden, and wrote a *Life of Napoleon*; was involved in the failure of

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the Ballantynes, to the extent of £117,000, 1826 ; ruined his health in paying this off ; made a tour on the Continent, 1831, but returned to die, 1832.

(b) **Character:** As a man Scott was generous and whole-hearted, courageous in difficulty, brave and high-spirited ; proud of his ancestry ; aristocratic in his prejudices and ambitions ; with an intense love of open air life ; fond of nature ; fonder still of everything connected with past history ; a man of the minstrel temper ; an antiquarian with wide human sympathies ; a lover of the picturesque in life and scenery ; the "Ariosto of the North." In politics leaned towards the Jacobites—the result of an innate local patriotism ; was none the less loyal to George III and IV ; impressed by kings, and the nobility ; a strong Tory ; in his last years bitterly opposed the Reform Bill.

(c) **Poems:** Translations of Burger in Lewis' *Tales of Wonder*, 1796 ; *The Eve of St. John*, 1799 ; *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802, (containing old ballads revised, and original ballads, e.g. *Glenfinlas*, *Cadyow Castle*, etc.) ; *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805 ; *Marmion*, 1808 ; *The Lady of the Lake*, 1810 ; *The Vision of Don Roderick*, 1811 ; *Rokeby*, 1813 ; *The Lord of the Isles*, 1814 ; *The Bridal of Triermain*, 1815 ; *Harold the Dauntless*, 1817.

**The Lay of the Last Minstrel** caught the imagination of Europe as a new form ; it is poor as a narrative, but combines many of the elements of romance : the feudal atmosphere ; the ballad motive ; the vivid description of "externals" ; the supernatural interest ; the high spirits and love of adventure : all superposed on a rather insipid love-story.

**Marmion** : a better poem and tale ; as full of true romance, but more human than the *Lay* ; the character of Marmion himself interesting, as well as the vivid picture of Tudor times with its castles, abbeys, and the stirring battle-scene of Flodden.

**The Lady of the Lake** : distinguished by its fine scenery and its more delicate characterization ; attractive from its romantic descriptions of the wild Trossachs ; the island on Loch Katrine ; the characters of Douglas, Roderick Dhu, and James V ; the gathering of the clans ; the mission of the fiery cross ; the famous fight between FitzJames and Roderick. The best poem of its class.

With the failure of the *Lord of the Isles*, Scott wisely recognized the superior attraction of Byron and turned to the Waverley Novels.

The **Songs**, scattered through the novels and longer poems, are among Scott's best poetic work, and in his original ballads he also struck a memorable note. Lacking

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in the finer touches of poetry and metre, he gets his effects by broad and vigorous dashes and rapid movement ; but in his best songs he came near to lyrical perfection.

(d) **Prose Work :** *Waverley*, 1814; *Guy Mannering*, 1815; *The Antiquary*, 1816; *The Black Dwarf*, 1816; *Old Mortality*, 1816; *Rob Roy*, 1817; *The Heart of Midlothian*, 1818; *The Bride of Lammermoor*, 1819; *The Legend of Montrose*, 1819; *Ivanhoe*, 1819; *The Monastery*, 1820; *The Abbot*, 1820; *Kenilworth*, 1821; *The Pirate*, 1821; *The Fortunes of Nigel*, 1822; *Peveril of the Peak*, 1822; *Quentin Durward*, 1823; *St. Ronan's Well*, 1823; *Redgauntlet*, 1824; *The Betrothed*, 1825; *The Talisman*, 1825; *Woodstock*, 1826; *The Fair Maid of Perth*, 1828; *Anne of Geierstein*, 1828; *Count Robert of Paris*, 1831; *Castle Dangerous*, 1831. These constitute the Waverley Novels : beside them may be mentioned *Tales of a Grandfather*, and the *Life of Napoleon*, 1827.

The novels represent a body of romantic fiction of astonishing variety and interest : except in the last two, the wizard's power to hold his readers did not relax throughout the series. In style they are free and easy, but by no means careless ; Scott's prose is equal to all but the highest requirements—which he did not make ; he was not a deliberate artist, but a tale-teller carried away by the abundance of his material. The merits of the novels are : fidelity to the spirit if not to the details of history ; picturesqueness—colour and movement ; pathos, humour, inexhaustible vitality ; breadth of sympathy ; sense of character. They do not touch deeply the “problems” of life, religious or philosophical. Among their memorable characters are : Richard I, Saladin, Louis XI, Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth, Leicester, James I, Montrose, Prince Charles Edward, Graham of Claverhouse, Rob Roy, Balfour of Burleigh, Oldbuck, Nicol Jarvie, Pierce Shafton, Edie Ochiltree, Dominie Sampson, Dandie Dinmont, Richie Monoplies, Wamba, Rebecca, Flora MacIvor, Diana Vernon, Jeanie Deans, Mause Headrigg, Madge Wildfire, Meg Merrilees.

(e) **Influence :** The founder of the historical novel ; inspired a long line of imitators, in England, France (e.g. Victor Hugo, Dumas), and Germany ; was recognized on the Continent as the focus of the English romantic movement, and enjoyed extraordinary popularity. In poetry he showed the way to Byron and Moore. He established a literature based on local patriotism, and made the antiquarian study of the past a live thing. In all the external aspects of “romance,” he was king ; he had no contact with the melancholy, the restlessness, the spirit of philosophic inquiry, the interest in self-analysis, the purely literary and artistic aims which characterized other aspects of the movement.

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(f) **Appreciations:** If Scott has contributed no great characters, like Hamlet, or Don Quixote, or Mephistopheles, to the world of fiction, he is the undisputed parent of a whole population full of enduring vitality, and, if rising to no ideal standard, yet reflecting with unrivalled clearness the characteristics of some of the strongest and sturdiest of the races of man.

—SIR LESLIE STEPHEN.

When Time, that old ravager, has done his very worst, there will be enough left of Sir Walter to carry down his name and fame to the remotest age.—BIRRELL.

## II. SUCCESSORS OF SCOTT

(a) Scott's success in narrative poetry inspired Byron (p. 198) and Moore; a few minor poets group themselves around him also.

**James Hogg** (1772–1835): “the Ettrick Shepherd,” poet and writer of prose-tales; attracted the notice of Scott in 1800 through his interest in the legends of the Border; his songs have a genuine freshness and felicity; his ballads and tales have the right note of artlessness and sometimes a grim humour; his best verse is in *The Queen's Wake*, 1813, which owed much to Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*.

**William Motherwell** (1797–1835): lawyer and journalist, had a fine lyrical gift: e.g. in *Jeanie Morrison*; in song and ballad he followed Scott, but with a more plaintive note; his ballads from the Norse were pioneer work of importance; *Poems Narrative and Lyrical*, 1832.

**Joanna Baillie** (1762–1851): writer of plays and poems, lived in London from 1784; published *Plays of the Passions* (1798, 1802, 1812), on the model of the Wordsworthian theory of poetry; and in *Fugitive Verses*, 1840, gave us delicate songs and legendary poems inspired by Scott, but without his force; some of her poems are pleasant and graceful in form and feeling.

**John Leyden** (1775–1811): taught Scott much about the minstrelsy of the border, and wrote a few worthy ballads; **Allan Cunningham** (1784–1842) wrote spirited songs with such local flavouring as to win Scott's approval; the voluminous third-rate work of **Mrs. Felicia Hemans** (1794–1835) and **Letitia E. Landon** (“L. E. L.”: 1802–38) was very popular.

**Thomas Moore** (1779–1852): born in Dublin; wrote clever boyish verses at 15; was a friend of Robert Emmet; came to England, 1799; published *Odes of Anacreon*, 1800; obtained a government post at Bermuda, 1803; returned soon to England, and became popular and prosperous with the *Irish Melodies*, 1807–34; wrote *Lalla Rookh*, a long Oriental tale, in luscious and easy-flowing verse, 1817; *The Fudge Family in Paris*, 1818, the

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best of his satires ; and much miscellaneous verse of little weight, together with *Lives of Sheridan*, 1825, and *Byron*, 1830—the latter quite a readable work still. His reputation has fallen very much ; his songs are light, musical, sentimental, but rarely deep and strong ; he had wit and glitter, but no high vision or deep imagination.

(b) In historical fiction Scott's best successors have been distinguished for other work—Kingsley, Reade, Thackeray, George Eliot, Stevenson. But there are some who may best be placed here.

**Maria Edgeworth** (1767–1849) : brought Ireland into fiction in such a way as to arouse the admiration of Scott ; most of her work was educational and moral in its purpose ; many of her stories had a didactic aim ; but in *Castle Rackrent*, 1798 ; *The Absentee*, 1812 ; and *Ormond*, 1817, she has given us the humour and pathos of Ireland with the literary skill and the insight of genius. Her other tales suffer from too much "purpose" ; but this cannot do away with the charm, the inventive skill, the vitality of her Irish pictures. Other Irish writers, such as **John Banim** (1798–1842), **Gerald Griffin** (1803–40) and **William Carleton** (1798–1869) kept the flame alive.

**Charles Lever** (1806–72) : is responsible for the stage Irishman, the rollicking ne'er-do-well soldier, without refinement or any of the finer Irish traits. *Harry Lorrequer*, 1839, and *Charles O'Malley*, 1841, exhausted his vein ; they are hardly novels, so much as bewildering strings of lively adventure.

**Frederick Marryat** (1792–1848) : rather a successor of Smollett than of Scott, used his knowledge of the sea in spirited yarns like *Peter Simple*, 1834 ; *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, 1836 ; etc.

**George P. R. James** (1801–60) : wrote many historical novels, conscientious in workmanship, sound in knowledge, respectable in style, wooden in form : *Richelieu* is perhaps the best.

**William Harrison Ainsworth** (1805–82) : was scarcely less prolific and retains some of his popularity with *The Tower of London*, 1840, and *Old St. Paul's*, 1841 ; he had an antiquarian's knowledge of history, but no attractive style, though his stories are often good.

**John Galt** (1779–1832) : an Ayrshire man, attempted to rival Scott ; wrote *Ayrshire Legatees*, 1820 ; *Annals of the Parish*, 1821 ; *The Provost*, 1822 ; *The Entail*, 1823—describing the petty details of village life with considerable humour and power ; in this kind of work he has had few superiors.

**Susan Edmonstone Ferrier** (1782–1854) : a successful novelist of the current upper-class society of Scotland ; showed much skill in character-drawing and within her range a keen faculty of

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observation; chief works: *Marriage*, 1818; *The Inheritance*, 1824; *Destiny*, 1831.

**Edward Bulwer Lytton** (1803-73): a man of great activity and versatile intellect: M.P., 1831; Colonial Secretary, 1858; became Lord Lytton, 1866. Readily followed the popular taste in literature; wrote several successful dramas—*The Lady of Lyons*, 1838; *Richelieu*, 1839; *Money*, 1840; made his fame with *Pelham*, 1828, a clever society novel; and *Eugene Aram*, 1832, a melodramatic romance of crime; wrote many other novels—some historical, after Scott, as *The Last Days of Pompeii*, 1834; *Rienzi*, 1835; *The Last of the Barons*, 1843; *Harold*, 1848; some domestic as *The Caxtons*, 1849; *My Novel*, 1853; *Kenelm Chillingly*, 1873: some with a pretentious flavour of half digested philosophy as *Ernest Maltravers*, 1837; *Alice*, 1838; *Zanoni*, 1842; *The Coming Race*, 1871: besides other novels and some verse, which all reveal an industrious and acquisitive mind; an eloquent writer but rhetorical and “stagy” in speeches, situations and characters.

**Benjamin Disraeli** (1804-81): Prime Minister, 1867 and 1874-80; resembled Lytton in his facility of intellect, grandiosity of style and exaggeration of sentiment; his best novels—*Coningsby*, 1844; *Sybil*, 1845; *Tancred*, 1847; *Lothair*, 1870—interesting for their political sidelights and acute criticism; *Vivian Grey*, 1827; *Alroy*, 1833; *Henrietta Temple*, 1837—the best of the others.

**Thomas Love Peacock** (1785-1866): a self-educated student of Greek, did not succeed in his ambition to write classical poetry; knew the Welsh mountains and their legends; friend of Shelley, to whom he owed much; commenced his queer novels with *Headlong Hall*, 1816; wrote also *Melincourt*, 1817; *Nightmare Abbey*, 1818; *Maid Marian*, 1822; *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, 1829; *Crotchet Castle*, 1831; *Gryll Grange*, 1860: novels with little or no plot, a dry style, much grim humour, and biting satire of contemporary men and ideas; they are “caviare to the general,” but to those who can appreciate their ironic outlook and fastidious literary skill, they are charming; they are a unique type in English; the verses scattered among them enhance their interest, and show Peacock as a true poet.

## D. Miscellaneous Prose Writers

### I. HISTORY AND POLITICS

#### (a) Democratic Writers.

**William Godwin** (1756-1836): made a great name with *Political Justice*, 1793, a reasoned plea for philosophical anarchy; strongly influenced Shelley and (to some extent) Wordsworth; the book is heavy and dull, but has solid merits. His novels—

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*Caleb Williams*, 1794 ; and *St. Leon*, 1799—are also ponderous and have almost passed into oblivion.

**Tom Paine** (1737–1808) : in the *Rights of Man*, 1792 ; and *The Age of Reason*, 1793–1807 ; wrote in a forcible style the same principles for less sophisticated readers.

**William Cobbett** (1762–1835) : son of a Surrey labourer, became a soldier and attacked army abuses ; went to America and attacked her institutions in *Peter Porcupine*, 1792–1800 ; returned to England and started the *Political Register*, which ran from 1802 to 1835 ; attacked all manner of abuses with unscrupulous recklessness in a vigorous fighting prose which rang through England ; was imprisoned and fined, but continued his work with undiminished vigour ; in his adaptability, his resource, his trenchant appeals to the practical element in us, he was the Defoe of his day ; at his best in the *Rural Rides*, on agricultural matters.

## (b) Philosophical Radicals.

**Jeremy Bentham** (1748–1832) : the founder of the school of philosophic radicalism, wrote *A Fragment on Government*, 1776 ; *Introduction to the Principles of Morals*, 1789 ; and many other works ; advocated utilitarianism as the basis of political and moral action—"the greatest happiness of the greatest number" ; wrote in a dry, uninimaginative style ; ignored the human factor ; but in an age of loose thinking had great influence on thought and on practical politics. Among his disciples was **James Mill** (1773–1836) whose *History of India*, 1818, and *Analysis of the Human Mind*, 1829, filled gaps in Bentham's system.

**David Ricardo** (1772–1823) : carried the principles of Bentham into political economy, 1817 ; but was opposed by **Thomas Robert Malthus** (1766–1834) whose *Essay on Population*, 1798, was one of the most stimulating sociological books of the century.

(c) **Historians** : The best historians of the period followed the example of Gibbon in their erudition, but did not rise to the height of his style. Among those whose works are still consulted are—

**Henry Hallam** (1778–1859) : *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, 1818—sound and good ; *The Constitutional History of England*, 1827—broke new ground successfully ; *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, 1837—not so good.

**Sir William Napier** (1785–1860) : *History of the Peninsular War*, 1828–40—personal and vivid, partial but reliable ; *Conquest of Scinde*, 1844–6.

**John Lingard** (1771–1851) : a *History of England*, 1819–30, —from the Catholic point of view—moderate and learned.

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**Sharon Turner** (1768–1847) : a *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 1799–1805—an excellent beginning in a new field.

**William Roscoe** (1753–1831) : Lives of *Lorenzo de' Medici*, 1796, and *Leo X*, 1805—still consulted.

**William Mitford** (1744–1827) : *History of Greece*, 1784–1818—broad and clear, but superseded by Grote.

**Henry Hart Milman** (1791–1868) : *History of the Jews*, 1829 ; *History of Latin Christianity*, 1854–6 : candid and critical : full of insight and ideas, but only half grasped.

## II. ESSAYISTS—CRITICISM

A revolution in criticism now apparent ; due to (i) the romantic revival, with its insistence on the personal note ; (ii) the influence of Coleridge and the Germans : matter considered as well as manner : appreciation and sympathy with the author : emancipation from the tyranny of rules ; (iii) the foundation of the reviews and magazines, providing critics with more opportunities.

**Edinburgh Review** : founded 1802 ; edited by Jeffrey ; contributors included Sydney Smith, Brougham, Mackintosh, Horner, etc ; Whig in politics ; conservative but sound in critical attitude.

**Quarterly Review** : founded 1809 ; edited by Gifford ; contributors—Lockhart, Scott, Canning, Southey, etc. ; Tory ; critical articles more violent than those of its rival.

**Blackwood's Magazine** : 1817 ; Wilson, Lockhart, Hogg, Maginn.

**London Magazine** : 1820 ; Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Hood.

**Westminster Review** : 1824 ; the organ of the philosophical Radicals.

**Fraser's Magazine** : 1830 ; early numbers contained work by Carlyle and Thackeray.

**Francis Jeffrey** (1773–1850) : the Pontifex Maximus of the Edinburgh ; a systematic but harsh and hard-hitting critic ; opposed Wordsworth ; deprecated Scott ; had no faculty of appreciation where his critical rules were not observed ; honest, but lacking in humour ; the centre of a brilliant literary circle at Edinburgh.

**Sydney Smith** (1771–1845) : a Yorkshire vicar ; a witty political writer on current topics ; a genuine lover of liberty and of good literature. *Letters of Peter Plymley*, 1807–8, is the

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volume in which his good-humoured pleasantries have least lost their flavour.

**William Gifford** (1757–1826) : well-known as a satirist of revolutionary and romantic ideas through the *Anti-Jacobin*, 1797 ; a bitter foe of all novelty ; attacked Keats with venomous pen ; satirized by Hazlitt in *The Spirit of the Age* ; brought out the standard edition of Ben Jonson.

**John Gibson Lockhart** (1794–1854) : succeeded Gifford, 1825 ; contributed slashing satiric articles to the early *Blackwoods* ; “the scorpion” of Edinburgh ; commanded a keen style, incisive wit and full information ; Tory and anti-romantic ; *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, 1819, excellent and amusing caricatures of Edinburgh society ; translated some Spanish ballads effectively, 1822 ; *Life of Burns*, 1828 ; *Life of Scott*, 1837, his finest work, a biography worthy of its subject.

**John Wilson** (‘Christopher North’ : 1785–1854) : one of the lively band who contributed to the early fame of *Blackwood* ; a bold free, athletic writer ; boisterous, breezy, unequal ; a stimulating critic of all kinds of matters ; remembered by his share of *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, 1822–35, a series of imaginary dialogues on things in general : humourous, genial, eloquent or absurd according to the writer’s fancy.

**William Hazlitt** (1778–1830) : son of a Unitarian minister at Maidstone ; developed early his passion for liberty and his interest in literature ; met Coleridge, 1798, but did not remain long under his influence ; tried art with little success ; wrote on philosophy and politics ; did journalism and entered into bitter controversies ; found his true bent in *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1817 ; gave three courses of lectures, published in *Lectures on the English Poets*, 1818 ; on the *English Comic Writers*, 1819 ; and on the *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, 1820 : all excellent work, going to the gist of the subject, marked by sound judgment, adequate knowledge, and discerning breadth of view ; in emulation of Schlegel and Coleridge ; showing a keen dramatic sense, and a sure feeling for what was best ; setting his authors in their proper perspective ; romantic, yet just to Dryden and Pope. His rather unamiable temperament, embittered by attacks in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, expresses itself in the biased and brilliant satire of *The Spirit of the Age*, 1825 ; wrote an ambitious *Life of Napoleon*, 1827 ; and continued to write articles

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till his death. With all his faults he remains one of the most stimulating and helpful of our critics.

**Charles Lamb** (1775-1834): born in the Temple ; went to Christ's Hospital, 1782 ; became a clerk at the South Sea House, 1789 ; entered the service of the East India Company, 1792 ; took charge of his sister Mary, after in a fit of madness she had killed their mother, 1796 ; lived in humble circumstances a life of drudgery and devotion, always cheerfully borne ; wrote a few poems, including *The Old Familiar Faces* ; was a friend and admirer of Coleridge, of Godwin and Hazlitt ; attempted a novel, *Rosamund Gray*, 1798, and a tragedy, *John Woodvill*, 1802—without success ; wrote *Tales from Shakespeare* (with Mary), 1807 ; brought out his *Specimens* of the Elizabethan Dramatists of the age of Shakespeare, with short critical notes, 1808 ; contributed *Essays of Elia* to the *London Magazine*, 1823-33 ; pensioned by the East India Company, 1825 ; lived at Edmonton till his death, 1834. A subtle and fine critic with some limitations ; keen to see beauty and humanity ; aroused a new interest in such men as Webster, Ford, and Massinger. The prince of our familiar essayists ; rich in tender and humorous reminiscences ; full of quaint fancy couched in a diction suggesting memories of such writers as Fuller, Burton, and Browne ; their style as pleasing and unexpected as the charm of their humour and humanity.

**Leigh Hunt** (1784-1859) : shared with Hazlitt a sturdy independence in politics and the necessity of earning his living by his articles ; was a man of admirable character, friend of Shelley and Byron, and supporter of Keats ; edited *The Examiner*, 1808, and *The Indicator*, 1819 ; suffered two years' imprisonment for free criticism of the Prince Regent, 1813-15 ; will be remembered as a genial chatty essayist and a fair-minded critic. His long poem, the *Story of Rimini*, 1816, is interesting for metrical reasons ; a few of his short poems, such as *Abou Ben Adhem*, are more satisfying.

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**Thomas De Quincey** (1785–1859) : son of a Manchester merchant ; educated at Manchester Grammar School ; ran away, 1802, and lived as a vagrant in London ; at Oxford, 1803–8 ; went to live at Grasmere, 1809 ; read much in philosophy and literature, while the opium habit grew upon him ; married a farmer's daughter, 1816 ; contributed the *Confessions of an Opium Eater* to the *London Magazine*, 1821 ; wrote much on political economy, German literature and philosophy, etc., in the *London* and *Blackwood* ; moved permanently to Edinburgh, 1830 ; continued his magazine work with uninterrupted profusion ; collected his works in 17 volumes just before his death, 1859. He is the master of the “grand style” ; his diction is on all occasions characterized by an exuberant splendour, imaginative rhetoric, gorgeous flow of fine words : an admirable gift of exposition : great dialectic skill ; on the other side, too many digressions : over-drawn logical analysis : excess of gold and glitter in unsuitable places so that it often becomes tiresome.

From the mass of his work, we may choose : the *Confessions*, 1821 ; *Letters to a Young Man*, 1823 ; *On Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts*, 1827 ; *The Revolt of the Tartars*, 1837 ; *Suspiria de Profundis*, 1845 ; *Joan of Arc*, 1847 ; *The English Mail Coach*, 1849. Two books of larger scope : *Klosterheim*, 1832—a romantic novel ; and *The Logic of Political Economy*, 1844, show that his talent was not suited to long works : he was a consummate rhetorician and expositor—not an artist.

**Walter Savage Landor** (1775–1864) : born at Warwick ; educated at Rugby and Oxford ; rusticated, 1794, for riotous conduct ; bought an estate at Llanthony, 1809 ; had trouble with his neighbours about agricultural experiments ; went to Italy, 1814 ; returned in 1835 and resided at Bath ; compelled to leave by a libel suit, 1858 ; respected by all the great writers of his time down to Browning and Swinburne ; touches the romantic movement in his sturdy republicanism and in his early poems, but the chief inspiration of his work was the Latin and Greek classics. He was a man of hot quarrelsome temper and crotchety character, but his

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mind was of singular nobility, and this is reflected in the chaste elegance of his prose style. His writings will appeal to few who cannot bring to them something of his scholarship and dignity ; they are apt to be cold and remote in their elaborate perfection of style, but the presence of a great mind, and noble sentiments fitly expressed, atones for that.

(i) **Poems** : Early Poems, 1795 ; *Gebir*, 1798—a romance in Miltonic blank verse ; *Chrysaor*, 1802 ; *Idyllia Heroica*, 1814—Latin versions of Greek legends ; *Hellenics*, 1847 ; and a considerable amount of occasional verse, which contains his best poetry : e.g. *Rose Aylmer* ; his Epigram on Himself, etc.

(ii) **Dramas** : *Count Julian*, 1812 ; *Fra Rupert*, 1841 ; *The Siege of Ancona*, 1842.

(iii) **Prose** : *Imaginary Conversations*, 1824-40 ; *Examination of Shakespeare*, 1834 ; *Pericles and Aspasia*, 1835 ; *Pentameron*, 1837. These contain his best work ; in the *Conversations* we have dialogues setting forth the characters of the great men and movements of ancient and modern times ; *Pericles and Aspasia* is similar in intention but epistolary in form ; the *Pentameron* is an intensely interesting set of five dialogues between Petrarch and Boccaccio, chiefly on literary themes.

## E. The Shelley Group

### I. JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

(a) **Life** : The son of a livery-stable keeper, born at Moorfields ; received a fair education at a private school ; apprenticed to a surgeon at Edmonton, 1810 ; qualified for the medical profession, 1816 ; made the acquaintance of the *Faerie Queene* and Chapman's *Homer* ; published his first poems, 1817 ; attracted the friendship of Leigh Hunt ; published *Endymion*, 1818 ; attacked by the *Quarterly* ; fell in love with Fanny Brawne ; continued to write beautiful verse ; published *Hyperion*, 1820 ; went to Rome in search of health and died there, 1821.

(b) **Works** : *Poems*, 1817 ; *Endymion*, 1818 ; *Lamia*, 1820 ; *Odes* ; *Hyperion*, 1820.

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**Endymion**: tells the old story of Endymion and the moon-myths in four books; in heroic couplets of easy fluency and much sweetness; romantic in tone, owing much to Spenser; confused in its main plan, but frequently very beautiful in detail; youthful and immature, but of high promise; too new for the critics; shows his life-quest for beauty as the supreme ideal.

**Hyperion**: an attempt to render the great sun-myth of the Greeks; in blank verse of astonishing power—almost equal to Milton's; unfinished: Book I, with its picture of the fallen gods; Book II, containing the discussion between them; and a part of III—only being completed; apparently designed to show the triumph of the gods of wisdom and light over the old force-deities; a noble theme, finely begun.

**The Eve of St. Agnes**: a romantic tale in verse, in Spenserian stanzas, rich in sensuous beauty; perhaps the finest sustained example of the suggestive use of beautiful imagery in the language. **Isabella**, a similar tale taken from Boccaccio, is almost as fine: **Lamia**, a story of enchantment, in heroic couplets, is hardly less beautiful; memorable for its closing lines on the advantage of poetry over philosophy in the search for truth.

**Odes**: the *Ode to a Nightingale*; *On a Grecian Urn*; *To Autumn*: represent Keats's finest and most perfectly finished work; the *Ode to Psyche*; *On Melancholy*; *On Indolence*; *To Fanny*: also good, and inferior only to the three great ones.

**Sonnets**: unequal; four masterpieces: viz. "On first looking into Chapman's Homer," 1816; "When I have fears that I may cease to be," 1817; "To one who has been long in city pent," 1818; "Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art," 1819.

**Other Poems**: *Sleep and Beauty*, 1817, one of the best of his early poems; *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern*, 1818; *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, 1818, a faery ballad, a masterpiece of suggestion; "In a drear-nighted December"—a song, 1818; *The Eve of St. Mark*, 1819, an unfinished ode.

(c) **Characteristics**: Combined the "fine excess" of romanticism with an instinctive sense of form remarkable in one who did not know Greek; sought beauty as the revealer of truth in art; achieved it by means of the minute realism of his sensuous imagery; his poetry in no sense didactic or philosophical, no "criticism of life"; owed much to Chatterton in his romantic tales, also to Leigh Hunt, to Coleridge and to

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Milton ; but most of his work his own vision ; recognized its immaturity—"a feverish attempt rather than a deed accomplished" ; was more severe in self-criticism, more just than the critics ; an "inheritor of unfulfilled renown" ; yet a potent influence on later poets, e.g. Tennyson.

(d) **Appreciations:** I have not the slightest feeling of humility towards the public or to anything else in existence but the Eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of Great Men.—KEATS—referring to the attacks of the *Quarterly*.

From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
He is secure.—SHELLEY.—*Adonais*.

His fragment of *Hyperion* seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Aeschylus.—BYRON.

No one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

### II. PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

(a) **Life:** Born at Field Place, Horsham, 1792 ; son of an English squire ; revealed his peculiar character early : as a child wrote verses and read unusual books ; went to a private school at Isleworth ; then to Eton, 1805 ; a precocious scholar and student ; wrote at school the weird romances, *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*, 1810 ; printed "Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire," 1810 ; went to Oxford, 1810 ; was happy there, but expelled for his tract on "the Necessity of Atheism," 1811 ; took rooms in London ; married Harriet Westbrook, 1811 ; lived happily with her at Edinburgh, York, Keswick, in Ireland, Cwm Elan, Lynmouth, Tremadoc, 1811–13 ; formed friendship with Godwin and entered on various wild political schemes, 1812–13 ; estrangement from Harriet began at Bracknell, 1813 ; separated from her, and went abroad with Mary Godwin, 1814 ; in money and legal difficulties, lived with Mary in London, at Marlow, or abroad, and wrote some of his best poems, 1814–17 ; married Mary, 1816 ; owing to Lord Eldon's decision against him, left England for good, 1818 ; lived the rest of his life in Italy, at Venice, Naples (1818), Rome (1819), Leghorn (1819), Florence

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(1819), Pisa (1820-2); writing and reading much; often in ill-health and dejection; drowned in the Bay of Spezia, 1822.

(b) **Works**: *Queen Mab*, 1813; *Alastor*, 1816; *The Revolt of Islam* (*Laon and Cythna*), 1818; *Rosalind and Helen*, 1818; *Julian and Maddalo*, 1819; *Prometheus Unbound*, 1819; *The Cenci*, 1819; many lyrics and minor poems, 1819-21; *Epi-psychidion*, 1821; *Adonais*, 1821; *Hellas*, 1821; *The Triumph of Life*, 1822.

**Queen Mab**: a wild fantastic plea for atheism, essentially a juvenile work.

**Alastor**: "the spirit of solitude"; his first great poem; in blank verse of almost lyrical intensity and full of the true "stuff" of poetry; imaginative descriptions of nature; strong personal appeal.

**The Revolt of Islam**: a long poem in Spenserian stanzas; a confused story, but beautiful in its details; the character of Laon that of a high-souled martyr for the cause of liberty; the poem a richly-eloquent paean of liberty and love; accompanied by an interesting preface.

**Prometheus Unbound**: contains the same doctrine—of Love as the law of Life—worked out with far greater power; a lyrical drama, containing many passages of great beauty and noble passion; the personages not human but demi-gods and spirits; a dramatic poem, not a play; an allegory of the final triumph of the light-bringer (Prometheus) in union with Love (Asia) over the forces of injustice, tyranny and darkness.

**The Cenci**: a contrast with *Prometheus Unbound*; a passionate drama of intense human emotions; characters marked by strong individuality; shows unexpected powers of impersonal dramatic appeal; comparatively well received.

**Lyrics**: the most memorable part of Shelley's work; complex and simple, they show a wonderful command of metre, and are instinct with the very spirit of music; sincere and spontaneous in their emotions; the voice of an exquisite and beautiful spirit. Among the best are:—*Ode on the West Wind*, 1819; *To a Skylark*, 1820; *The Cloud*, 1820; Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples, 1819; Lines written among the Euganaean Hills, 1819; Lines to an Indian Air, 1819; A Summer Evening Churchyard, 1815; To Night, 1820; "One word is too often profaned," 1820; "O World! O Life! O Time!" 1822; with many others, including the choral odes in the dramas.

**Adonais**: the elegy written on the death of Keats; one of the greatest English elegies; in Spenserian stanzas of

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unfaltering power and beauty ; contains a passionate attack on the critics ; also poetic pictures of himself and contemporary poets ; a confident paeon on the immortality of genius ; does not fall back on Christianity, but on a wider faith—a vague pantheism ; Death liberates Life from its material entanglements.

**Hellas** : the tragedy of Greece's bid for independence ; ends in disaster, but does not quench the poet's ardent faith in liberty ; "The world's great age begins anew."

**Other poems** : needful to anyone who would know Shelley are :—*Epipsychedion*, containing his mature love-philosophy in beautiful heroic couplets ; *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, 1820, with his pleasant personal touches ; *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, 1816 ; *Julian and Maddalo*, 1819, imaginative picture of discussion between Shelley and Byron ; *The Masque of Anarchy*, 1819, a vigorous revolutionary poem ; *The Sensitive Plant*, 1820 ; *The Triumph of Life*, a fine fragment in terza rima, 1822.

(c) **Characteristics** : His opinions and his conduct to Harriet misunderstood in his own day ; a man of lofty and generous character ; filled with a "passion for reforming the world" ; idealized Love as the saving emotion of humanity ; to him Love was what Beauty was to Keats, the guiding impulse of his life ; a wide reader, with excellent judgment for all that was great ; no mean thinker, though vague and misty often ; his verse strong as well as beautiful ; sound sense in his *Defence of Poetry* ; his genius essentially lyrical ; his lyrics express the complex and aspiring emotions, rather than the simply human (*cf.* Burns) ; friend of Byron whom he influenced to his benefit ; his influence felt in Browning and Swinburne ; romantic in his vivid individuality ; and that one of the purest and most ethereal in our literature ; out of touch with man and nature as they are, he idealized them into "something rich and strange."

(d) **Appreciations.**

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift—  
A Love in desolation masked ;—a Power  
Girt round with weakness.—*Adonais*.

The best and least selfish man I ever knew.—BYRON.

The Shelley of actual life is a vision of beauty and radiance, indeed, but availing nothing, effecting nothing. And in poetry,

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no less than in life, he is a beautiful *and ineffectual angel*, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

He lived in two worlds, and in both of these did work, which was at once varied and distinct. One was the world of Mankind and its hopes, the other was the world of his own heart. His poetic life was an alternate changing from one of these worlds to the other.—STOPFORD BROOKE.

## III. LORD BYRON (1788-1824)

(a) **Life** : Born of a wild race ; spent his childhood at Aberdeen ; succeeded to the title, 1798 ; went to Harrow, 1801, and Cambridge, 1805 ; a spoilt child, and wayward and often dissolute youth ; left Cambridge, 1808 ; toured Europe and the East, 1810-11 ; published *Childe Harold*, I and II, the fruit of his journey, 1812 ; wrote his tales in verse, and eclipsed the popularity of Scott, 1813-16 ; became the “lion” of London ; married, 1815 ; deserted by his wife and ostracized by society, 1816 ; went to Geneva and met Shelley, 1816 ; lived at Venice, 1816-19 ; fell in love with Countess Guiccioli ; settled in her palace at Ravenna, 1819 ; moved to Pisa, 1821, where he was again near Shelley ; supported the abortive plans of the Carbonari, 1821 ; joined the Greek revolt and tried to make its leaders worthy of their cause, 1823 ; died of fever at Missolonghi, 1824.

(b) **Works** : *Hours of Idleness*, 1807 ; *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809 ; *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, cantos I, II, 1812 ; *The Giaour*, 1813 ; *The Bride of Abydos*, 1813 ; *The Corsair*, 1814 ; *Lara*, 1814 ; *The Siege of Corinth*, 1816 ; *Parisina*, 1816 ; *Childe Harold*, canto III, 1816 ; *The Prisoner of Chillon*, 1816 ; *The Dream*, 1816 ; *Manfred*, 1817 ; *Beppo*, 1817 ; *Childe Harold*, canto IV, 1817 ; *Don Juan*, cantos I-IV, 1818-19 ; *The Prophecy of Dante*, 1819 ; *Marino Faliero*, 1820 ; *Sardanapalus*, 1821 ; *The Two Foscari*, 1821 ; *Cain*, 1821 ; *The Vision of Judgment*, 1822 ; *Don Juan* (concluded), 1822.

Note also the spirited tale of *Mazeppa*, 1816 ; the sonnet on *Chillon*, 1816, and the few lyrics.

[*Childe Harold*] : account of his European journey, 1810-11 ; first two cantos very popular by their easy Spenserian stanza, their descriptive power, and the pose of melancholy egotism assumed by the pilgrim ; canto III much finer, truer in

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feeling, written in Geneva ; influence of Wordsworth and Shelley admitted ; canto IV, written after a visit to Rome, is magnificent—almost the best piece of sustained poetry in Byron.

**Don Juan :** the work in which his genius is most characteristically revealed ; in easy-flowing ottava rima ; the adventures of a seeker after experience ; of astonishing variety and vitality ; eloquent and familiar, passionate and cynical, exalted and sarcastic—a bundle of contradictions ; full of unexpected wit, fine descriptions, tender and genuine sentiment, interspersed with flippant gibes, coarse episodes, squalid and insincere mockery ; brilliant and clever : in fact the mirror of Byron himself.

**Tales :** the Eastern tales, e.g. *The Giaour*, are melodramatic, full of gaudy colour and lavish display of violent passions, still readable in spite of their hasty workmanship. Much better, because written in a nobler mood are *Mazeppa* and *The Prisoner of Chillon* ; the latter told with a fine restraint ; a splendid poem of liberty.

**Dramas :** all except two hardly worthy of his powers ; *Manfred*, really a monodrama of the heart-sick philosopher driven to seek in nature a comrade of his wild defiance ; *Manfred* is too much Byron himself ; the descriptions of mountain scenery are superb ; *Cain*, Byron's revolt against a religion which makes the search for knowledge a sin ; an attempt to pose the problem of evil ; Cain and Adah the most dramatic characters in Byron ; some very fine poetry and a splendid passion for liberty of thought ; highly praised by Scott and Shelley.

**Satires :** the youthful *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* revealed his powers ; *Bepo* is a brilliant satiric tale ; *The Vision of Judgment*, his masterpiece in this vein ; a reply to Southey's panegyric on George III ; the King's misdeeds discussed between Michael and Lucifer at the gates of heaven ; he slips into heaven while St. Peter and the angels are in a maze through Southey's determination to read his own works aloud ! The satire brilliant, but mainly destructive.

**Lyrics :** not a great side of Byron's work : the Stanzas to Augusta ; the Destruction of Sennacherib ; "When we two parted" ; "Jephthah's Daughter" ; "Maid of Athens" ; are favourable examples.

(c) **Characteristics :** His nature essentially noble and generous ; warped by egotism ; the cynical mood an uncomfortable veil for a disillusioned soul ; scorned the littleness of the world but did not often rise above it ; his work romantic in its individualism, its scorn

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of authority, its defiant attack on conventional beliefs ; no hero-worship in his composition, and little reverence ; careless of his style, consequently very uneven ; not master of the finer elements of poetry ; yet exuberant and rich in his profuse variety ; grand, but rarely beautiful ; melancholy, but rarely wistful ; his sincerity felt to be doubtful, except in his passionate and scornful outbursts ; does not reach the highest levels, but few poets give us so much of that which nearly approaches them ; in attitude to nature, a poet of storm and mountain solitudes ; did not share Wordsworth's philosophic calm or Shelley's visionary beauty ; generously honoured by Shelley and Scott ; a European influence, placed on a very high pinnacle by Goethe, Victor Hugo, etc.

### (d) Appreciations.

Byron was not *all* Byron ; one small part  
Bore the impression of a human heart.  
Guided by no clear love-star's burning light  
Thro' the sharp surges of a northern night,  
In Satire's narrow strait he swam the best,  
Scattering the foam that hissed about his breast.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

A personality of Bryon's force counts for so much in life, and a rhetorician of Bryon's force counts for so much in literature ! But it would be most unjust to label Byron . . . as a rhetorician only. Along with his astounding power and passion he had a strong and deep sense for what is beautiful in nature, and for what is beautiful in human action and suffering. When he warms to his work, when he is inspired, Nature herself seems to take the pen from him . . . and to write for him.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

In English Literature Bryon had no followers : in his vein of satire, and in the use of the *Don Juan* stanza, he had been preceded by **John Hookham Frere** (1769–1846) in *The Monks and the Giants*, 1818, clever, but tame after *Beppo* ; and by **William Tennant** (1786–1848), a schoolmaster and professor at St. Andrew's, in *Anster Fair*, 1812, which has some of the rapid and easy movement of Bryon.

**Horace Smith** (1779–1849) : friend of Shelley and a fair poet, is remembered as the clever parodist of *Rejected Addresses*, 1812, written in conjunction with his brother James : they are not mere skits, but true parodies with a very enjoyable literary flavour.

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## IV. POETS OF THE TRANSITION

From the death of Byron to the recognition of Tennyson a lean period in poetry.

**Thomas Hood** (1799–1845): began with serious verse in Keat's style ; forced to write for a living he worked his humorous vein ; became the poetic punster and comic poet of his day ; produced cheerful work in spite of ill-health and misfortune ; at his best in such serious poems as *The Song of the Shirt* (in *Punch*, 1843) ; *The Bridge of Sighs* ; *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* ; *Fair Ines* ; "I remember" ; in eerie ballads like *The Dream of Eugene Aram* and *The Haunted House* ; or a weird grotesque like *Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg*. His poems were collected in two volumes : *Poems*, 1846 ; *Poems of Wit and Humour*, 1847.

**Winthrop Mackworth Praed** (1802–39) : the best (with Prior) of our writers of *vers de société* ; had the necessary humour, lightness of touch and metrical skill ; occasionally revealed a deeper power of character-drawing, as in *The Vicar*.

**Bryan Waller Procter** ("Barry Cornwall" : 1787–1874) : a writer of pleasant verse of no great power or depth ; popular, but ephemeral ; his best volume, *English Songs*, 1832.

**Ebenezer Elliott** (1781–1849) : steel-worker and afterwards a successful man of business ; a half educated poet with a strong love of nature : *The Village Patriarch*, 1829 ; has his niche in literature with the *Corn-Law Rhymes*, 1831—vivid, passionate, full of sympathy with the oppressed toiler whose life he had shared.

**John Keble** (1792–1866) : the saintly founder of the Oxford Movement, 1833 ; wrote a good deal of prose ; also *Lyra Innocentium* ; *The Christian Year*, 1827 ; and other verse. A theologian rather than a poet in his poems ; simple, graceful, scholarly, imitative ; with agreeable nature-passages.

**Thomas Lovell Beddoes** (1803–49) : an Oxford man, who lived in Germany or Switzerland from 1825 to 1846 ; wrote works in German, under the influence of Tieck ; in English published *The Bride's Tragedy*, 1822 ; and (posthumously) *Death's Jest Book*, 1850 and *Poems*, 1851 ; committed suicide at Basle, 1849. A queer compound of Webster, Shelley and the German ultra-romantics, with a gloomy and eccentric power of his own ; clever and accomplished, but unequal ; some of his songs very fine ; his dramas have a strange hold on their readers in spite of their grim play with tragic horrors.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

#### A. General

**Features.** Continuation of the romantic movement in poetry, much modified by new influences, especially classical ; more attention given to literature as Art ; free treatment of the problems of the time, religious or political ; history treated with more imagination and greater accuracy ; the methods of science become powerful in all departments of thought ; with a consequent relaxing of authority, and a drift into sceptical agnosticism ; multiplication of novels and periodicals ; prose-writing extended to a wider range of subjects in an imaginative manner ; widening of the reading public ; literature thus becomes more universal and more democratic in its appeal.

(a) **America** : Note the rise of an English Literature in the U.S.A. ; poets :—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82) ; John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–92) ; James Russell Lowell (1819–91) ; Walt Whitman (1819–91) ; novelists :—Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–64) ; Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49), distinguished as poet and short story writer ; general :—Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–72), moralist and essayist ; Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) ; Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–94) : all well-known in England.

(b) **France** : Victor Hugo continued to produce masterpieces : as poet, novelist, critic, politician, he was influential in Europe ; greatly admired by Swinburne ; among lesser poets of influence were Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) and Paul Verlaine (1844–96) ; Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850), George Sand (1804–76), Gustave Flaubert (1821–80), Guy de Maupassant (1850–93), Emile Zola (1840–1902) and Alphonse Daudet (1840–97) all made their mark in England as novelists of great and various powers ; in more serious literature, we may mention Ernest Renan (1823–92), the historian of the origins of

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Christianity ; and Hippolyte Taine (1828-93) "author of a stimulating History of English Literature.

(c) **Germany** : The one European poet was Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), a lyric poet of the first order, whose mockery killed the romantic movement in Germany ; apart from him the chief influence of Germany was felt in less literary fields : in theology and philosophy with Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Strauss (1808-74), Feuerbach (1804-72), Nietzsche (1844-1900) ; in history, with Niebuhr (1776-1831), Ranke (1795-1886) ; Mommsen (1817-1903) ; in criticism, with Gervinus (1805-71) ; and in science, from the *Kosmos* of Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) to the works of Haeckel (1834-1919).

(d) **Italy** : First affected by the romantic impulse in Manzoni (1785-1833) ; afterwards in the bitter odes of Count Leopardi (1798-1837)—poets of the age of slavery ; the age of freedom found voice in Carducci (1836-1907) ; its prophet, Mazzini (1805-72) was a European figure, who wrote well in Italian and English. Note the attraction of Italy for Byron, Shelley, Landor, Ruskin, the Brownings, Swinburne.

(e) **Other European Literatures** : Russia begins to share the literary heritage of Europe in the poems of Pushkin (1799-1837) ; her great novelists—Turgenev (1818-83), Tolstoi (1828-1910) and Dostoevsky (1822-81) are on the level of the greatest ; Tolstoi also a great spiritual force ; revival of native literature in Hungary, Bohemia, Denmark ; from Norway came Heinrik Ibsen (1828-1906), the most vital force in modern European drama.

(f) **Historical** : Note—for their influence on literature—the revolutions in France, 1830, 1848 ; the union of Italy, 1859-70 ; the union of Germany, 1871 ; the activity of Russia in the East ; the advance of democracy in England, 1832, 1867, 1884 ; the distracting influence of Napoleon III, 1852-70 ; the growth of democratic imperialism in England, 1890-1902 ; the increase in the power of Germany, 1871-1914 ; fuller knowledge of such countries as India and Japan.

## B. Poets

### I. ALFRED TENNYSON (1809-92)

(a) **Life** : Born at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire ; educated at Louth Grammar School, 1816-20 ; at home, 1820-8 ; at Cambridge, 1828-31 ; published *Poems by Two Brothers*, with his brother, Charles, 1826 ; won the Chancellor's medal with *Timbuctoo*, 1829 ;

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death of Arthur Hallam at Vienna, 1833 ; resided in London, writing and publishing occasional verse, 1833-44 ; at Cheltenham, 1844-50 ; married Emily Selwood, 1850 ; made a visit to Italy ; settled at Twickenham, 1850-2 ; appointed Poet Laureate, 1850 ; lived in the Isle of Wight, 1853-70 ; received the D.C.L. of Oxford, 1855 ; went to live at Haslemere, 1870 ; *Queen Mary* produced at the Lyceum, 1876 ; raised to the peerage by Gladstone, 1884 ; lived a quiet, uneventful life, writing steadily, till the end, 1892.

(b) **Relations with Contemporaries :** Though he took no part in public life, no English poet has been more generally honoured ; fortunate in the friends of his youth—Hallam, Monckton Milnes, Spedding, Trench ; had an appreciative friendship with Carlyle ; was valued by Landor, Thackeray, Macready, Gladstone, Fitzgerald ; later, by Longfellow and Browning ; and by such Americans as Whittier, Holmes, Walt Whitman ; a moderate Liberal in politics and religion, a typical Englishman, loyal to the royal family, and sincerely patriotic ; his proud insularity at once his strength and his weakness.

(c) **Works :** *Poems by Two Brothers*, 1826 ; *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, 1830, [including *Claribel*, *Mariana*, *The Dying Swan*, etc.] ; *Poems*, 1832, [including *The Lady of Shallott*, *The Lotos-eaters*, *The Dream of Fair Women*, *The Palace of Art*, *Œnone*] ; *Poems*, in two volumes, 1842, [including *Morte D'Arthur*, *Dora*, *Ulysses*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, *The Two Voices*] ; *The Princess*, 1847 ; *In Memoriam*, 1850 ; *Maud*, and other *Poems*, 1855, [including *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, 1852 ; *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, 1854 ; *The Brook*] ; *Idylls of the King*, 1859-85, [*Geraint and Enid*, *Merlin and Vivien*, *Lancelot and Elaine*, *Guinevere* in 1859 ; *Coming of Arthur*, *Holy Grail*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, *Passing of Arthur*, 1869 ; *Last Tournament*, 1871 ; *Gareth and Lynette*, 1872 ; *Balin and Balan*, 1885 ; *Marriage of Geraint* (as a separate idyll), 1888] ; *Enoch Arden*, 1864 ; *Lucretius*, 1868<sup>1</sup> ; *Queen Mary*, 1875 ; *Harold*, 1876 ; *The Revenge*, 1878 ; *The Lover's Tale*, 1879 ; *The Cup and The Falcon*, 1884 ; *Becket*, 1884 ; *Tiresias*, and other *Poems*, 1885 ; *Demeter*, and other *Poems*, 1889 ; *The Foresters*, 1892 ; *Crossing the Bar*, 1892 ; *The Death of Œnone*, *Akbar's Dream*, etc. 1892 (posthumous).

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(d) **Characteristics** : A poet who took his art seriously ; carefully polished and revised all his work ; hence its perfection of form, almost amounting to coldness (but cf. *Maud*) ; tried many metres and kinds, and succeeded in all except the drama ; echoes of the great poets of the past everywhere (Virgil, Dante, Spenser) ; touched the chief problems of the time in the spirit of the time—a spirit of compromise, without real boldness ; felt deeply and strongly on many things ; but was scarcely in touch with the aspirations of science or criticism or democracy ; not so robust as Browning, but a more fastidious poet.

As a lyrlist, he has had few equals in English : the songs in *The Princess* redeem that poem from failure ; *Maud* is a lyrical monodrama ; many minor lyrics of great beauty.

In classical poems—e.g. *Oenone*, *Ulysses*, *Tithonus*, *Lucretius*, etc., he is at his best : his fine sense of form is here harmonized with the true passion of the theme.

The Idylls of the King are his excursion into romance ; some of the tales are impressive, and contain some of his best work ; but the attempt to turn the naive and simple romances of Malory into an elaborate allegory, in which King Arthur is the ideal Victorian “gentleman,” was a difficult feat which was not successfully carried through.

The Tales of simple folk, e.g. *Enoch Arden*, *Aylmer's Field*, are too elaborate ; on the smaller scale, as in *Dora*, he achieved greater success ; in *The Northern Farmer*, he showed a gift of humorous dramatic portraiture of which he might have made more use.

In Memoriam, on the death of Arthur Hallam ; one of the greatest English elegies ; traces the story of his grief, his wrestlings with despair and doubt, to his final mood of sad acquiescence, in a series of loosely-linked poems ; the simple stanza, with its slow and solemn movement, admirably chosen ; rich in fine thoughts, nobly expressed ; its calm tone the evidence of his mastery over, not the suppression or non-existence of, his real passion. The Ode on the Death of Wellington can be called a weak poem only because the author of *In Memoriam* wrote it.

Tennyson's fame has fallen since his death ; his limitations, his aristocratic narrowness of view, his insular patriotism, his lack of penetrative vision, the fact that he rose no higher than the interpretation of his own

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age, his failure to achieve greatness in the higher forms of poetry—epic and drama: these perhaps too much insisted upon; what he did, he did extraordinarily well; by his perfect treatment of common themes he opened poetry to a wide range of readers.

A true human soul or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother!—CARLYLE.

## II. ROBERT BROWNING (1812-89)

(a) **Life:** Born in Camberwell; his father, an educated man of modest means, early recognized his son's talents; educated privately, chiefly at home with his father's books, and at London University, 1829-30; became exceptionally well-read in all literatures; published his first poem—*Pauline*, 1833; went to Russia, 1833-4; went to live at Hatcham, 1835; made the acquaintance of Macready, 1835—for whom he wrote his first play, *Strafford*, 1837; it was played at Covent Garden and withdrawn after five performances; made his first visit to Italy, Tyrol, the Rhine, Antwerp, 1838; issued *Bells and Pomegranates*, poems in pamphlet form, 1841-6; *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* produced at Drury Lane, 1843; again visited Italy, 1844; married Elizabeth Barrett, 1846; went to live at Pisa, 1846; lived at Florence, and elsewhere in Italy, with occasional visits to London, Paris, etc., 1847-61; met Tennyson in London, 1855; publication of Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, 1856; death of Mrs. Browning at Florence, 1861; returned to London, living at Warwick Crescent, 1861; received the LL.D. (Cambridge), 1879, and D.C.L. (Oxford), 1882; travelled much, went much into society, but continued to produce great poetry; died at Venice, 1889.

(b) **Relations with Contemporaries:** Not a public man, but not a recluse; he took a live interest in the movements of his time, but was no mere partisan; he was entirely with the Italians in 1859-60, with the North in the American Civil War, with France in 1870 (he devoted the fee for *Hervé Riel* to the victims of

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the siege of Paris); his views were Liberal, but he opposed Home Rule; he was cosmopolitan in his views of men—knew Mazzini, Macready, Dickens, and Carlyle, and was a good friend to Landor; of Nonconformist descent, he was a devout Christian, but not narrow; even before his death, he was the focus of a philosophic cult.

(c) **Works**: *Pauline*, 1833; *Paracelsus*, 1835; *Strafford*, 1837; *Sordello*, 1840; "Bells and Pomegranates," 1841-6 [*Pippa Passes*, 1841; *King Victor and King Charles* (drama), 1842; *Dramatic Lyrics*, 1842; *The Return of the Druses* (drama), 1843; *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, (drama), 1843; *Colombe's Birthday* (drama), 1844; *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, 1845; *Luria and A Soul's Tragedy* (dramas), 1846]; *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, 1850; *Men and Women*, 1855; *In a Balcony*, 1855; *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864; *The Ring and the Book*, 1868-9; *Balaustion's Adventure*, 1871; *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*, 1871; *Fifine at the Fair*, 1872; *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, 1873; *Aristophanes' Apology*, 1875; *The Inn Album*, 1875; *Pacchiarotto*, etc., 1876; *The Agamemnon of Æschylus*, 1877; *La Saisiaz*, 1878; *The Two Poets of Croisic*, 1878; *Dramatic Idylls*, 1879, 1880; *Jocoseria*, 1883; *Ferishtah's Fancies*, 1884; *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day*, 1887; *Asolando*, 1889.

**Paracelsus**: a study in dramatic form of the enthusiast for knowledge; Paracelsus is set in contrast with the poet Aprile, and Festus and Michal, humble unambitious friends of his; at the end he "attains" by learning that knowledge is only potent through love; a wonderful poem for a man of 23; rich in aspiring thought and noble rhetoric; owed much to Shelley and Byron; but original—the "study of a soul," like most of Browning's work.

**Sordello**: a similar study of a singer, drawn into politics by the sense of power within him and by sympathy with the people; a different poem—rapid, elliptical and involved in language, thought and feeling.

**Plays**: Browning's gifts dramatic; but his interest was chiefly in the inner development of his characters; hence the plays are deficient in action, but of deep psychological truth; failed on the stage; but the best are great poems, full of thought and subtle spiritual insight. *Pippa Passes* contains four dramatic episodes, linked by Pippa, the mill girl enjoying her annual holiday who, as she passes, influences the course of each episode; a beautiful poem; revealing Browning's best powers, and exhibiting his characteristic attitude to life at his best. *Strafford* is of

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interest for the masterly handling of Strafford and Pym ; the others all repay reading, especially *Colombe's Birthday* and *Luria*.

**Dramatic Lyrics, 1842 :** here Browning united his lyric and dramatic gifts with unique and vivid effect ; they include the well-known *My Last Duchess*, *In a Gondola*, *Incident of the French Camp*, and the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

**Dramatic Romances, 1845 :** extended the method of the 1842 volume with even greater power and success ; include *How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* ; *The Lost Leader* ; *Home Thoughts from Abroad* ; *The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's* ; *Saul*—probably the finest of all his shorter poems.

**Christmas Eve and Easter Day :** a religious poem, contrasting the religion of form with the religion of the spirit ; not argumentative ; dramatic and grotesquely humorous in the first part ; enthusiastic and finely hortatory in the second.

**Men and Women :** in two volumes ; an astonishing collection ; containing such little masterpieces as *Evelyn Hope* ; *Any Wife to Any Husband* ; *How it Strikes a Contemporary* ; *Two in the Campagna* ; *A Grammarian's Funeral* ; also the dramatic portraits of *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Andrea del Sarto* ; the masterly study of the worldly-minded bishop in *Bishop Blougram's Apology* ; besides such pieces as *The Statue and the Bust* ; *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha* ; *Holy Cross Day* ; *Cleon* ; and many other poems little inferior to these.

**Dramatis Personæ :** continues the tale to a climax in *Abt Vogler* ; *Rabbi ben Ezra* ; *Prospice*—containing some of his finest thoughts ; contains also *Caliban upon Setebos* and *Mr. Sludge the Medium*, which exhibit the marvellous range of his mental interests, and his intellectual force when handling unpromising themes.

**The Ring and the Book :** his most ambitious poem ; an epic made out of a story of commonplace crime ; in 12 books, each of which tells the story from a different point of view ; Book I is a prologue, II and III tell the story from the points of view of one half of Rome and the other half ; IV is the dispassionate narrative of the *Tertium Quid* ; V is Count Guido's subtle plea of justification ; VI the young friar, Caponsacchi's noble declaration of the purity of his love ; VII Pompilia's narrative—a very beautiful poem of itself ; VIII and IX the learned intricacies of the counsel for the prosecution and the defence ; X the judicial and impartial judgment of the Pope, a masterpiece of characterization ; XI the Count's mad and despairing appeal for life ; XII the poet's epilogue.

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The poem is very long ; but no work of the poet shows his amazing imaginative resource, his keen insight and sympathy, his fertility of intellect, more vividly : VI, VII, X are exceptionally fine. The story was found in an old book on a bookstall in Florence ; the murder took place in 1698.

**Balaustion's Adventure** : the most readable of his classical poems ; Balaustion an Athenian girl, who recited Euripides' *Alcestis* before the citizens of Syracuse ; the poet's admiration of Euripides shown also in *Aristophanes' Apology*, another fine poem which contains an original rendering of *Herakles* ; his *Agamemnon* not so satisfactory.

**Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau** : a casuistical study of Napoleon III, considered as a "saviour of society" ; the defence of the reign of the average man, against the claims of the aristocratic despot, and the democratic idealist ; laboured and difficult.

**Fifine at the Fair** : a study in the form of a monologue of the attractions of the world as portrayed in the gipsy girl Fifine, contrasted with the more enduring pleasures of real love and noble thought, embodied in *Elvire* ; contains some wonderful poetry ; but is perplexing, perverse, unduly philosophical in its fine-drawn discussions.

**Later Poems** : of these we may mention *La Saisiaz*, a dialogue on immortality ; *Pacchiarotto*, an artist-reformer, which revealed at least Browning's skill with eccentric rimes ; *Ferishtah's Fancies*, stories from Persian, dealing with religious thought ; the prologue and epilogue to *Asolando*, showing that his powers remained to the end.

(d) **Characteristics** : As a man, genial, breezy, fond of life ; as a poet, combined uniquely the lyric and the dramatic ; a student of the inner life, exceedingly subtle and profound ; put too much intellect into his poems, to the danger of their emotional appeal ; his style reflected the gymnastic subtlety of his brain—often obscure, discordant, harsh ; grotesque and grand at once ; its music not smooth or polished, but appropriate ; treated many unpoetic themes, but was not often beaten ; no poet has given us such a full and rich poetry of the soul ; influenced by Shelley at first, but no verse is more original in matter and method ; an optimist, believing in "God and love" ; a robust spirit, participating eagerly in life—not a fastidious recluse, shrinking from it.

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**Elizabeth Barrett Browning** (1806–61) : our most ambitious, perhaps our greatest poetess ; injured her spine, 1821, and was an invalid for the rest of her life ; unwisely treated by her father ; married Browning, 1846 ; her health improved, and she shared her husband's life in full till her death, 1861 ; wrote an *Essay on Mind*, 1826 ; a translation of *Prometheus Bound*, 1833 ; *The Seraphim*, 1838 ; *Poems*, 1844, (including *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, the *Drama of Exile*, the *Poet's Vow*, *Cowper's Grave*, and other poems) ; —all this indicating a scholarly mind, influenced by Byron and Pope, but notable for lyrical power and religious emotion ; *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, 1850—her best work, because of the enforced condensation ; *Casa Guidi Windows*, 1851—inspired by her love for Italy ; *Aurora Leigh*, 1856—an uneven poem, too long, but the work of a brave and high-minded woman ; *Poems before Congress*, 1860. Her best quality the expression of feeling lyrically ; her long poems too diffuse ; her husband's method failed with her, from the lack of his sustained intellectual power ; but she was an accomplished woman, with a fine and generous heart ; no mere weakling ; a true poet.

### III. MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–88)

(a) **Life** : Born at Laleham ; eldest son of Dr. Arnold of Rugby ; educated at Rugby and Oxford ; won the Newdigate prize for an English poem with *Cromwell*, 1843 ; fellow of Oriel, 1845 ; schoolmaster at Rugby, 1845 ; private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, 1847 ; inspector of schools, 1851–86 ; wrote his chief poems, before 1855 ; professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1857–67 ; reported on the education in German and French schools, 1868 ; gave his chief energies to official work, but wrote much on political, social, literary, and theological matters, with a little poetry ; retired from the Board of Education, 1886 ; and died suddenly at Liverpool, 1888.

(b) **Works** : **Poetry** : *The Strayed Reveller*, and other poems, 1849 ; *Empedocles on Etna*, and other poems, 1852 ; *Poems*,

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first series, 1853; second series, 1855; *Merope*, 1858; *New Poems*, 1867. **Prose**: Preface to the volume of *Poems*, 1853; *England and the Italian Question*, 1859; *On Translating Homer*, 1861-2; *A French Eton*, 1864; *Essays in Criticism*, first series, 1865; second series, 1888; *The Study of Celtic Literature*, 1867; *Culture and Anarchy*, 1867; *St. Paul and Protestantism*, 1871; *Friendship's Garland*, 1871; *Literature and Dogma*, 1873; *God and the Bible*, 1875; *Last Essays on Church and Religion*, 1877; *Mixed Essays*, 1879; *Irish Essays*, 1882; *Discourse in America*, 1885.

(i) **Narrative Poems**: generally written in a lyrical vein, and deficient in action; this applies least to *Sohrab and Rustum* (1853); *Balder Dead* (1855) is a beautiful poem; *Tristram and Iseult* (1852) an unsuccessful attempt to capture a passion too strong for the poet.

(ii) **Elegiac Poems**: here Arnold is one of our greatest poets; the note of change, a sad and melancholy undertone, congenial to his thought; has the grave and measured solemnity required for the elegy; e.g. *The Scholar-Gipsy*; *Thyrsis* (in memory of Clough, 1867), *Rugby Chapel*, *Dover Beach*, *Heine's Grave*, *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann*, *Westminster Abbey*, *Mycerinus*.

(iii) **Lyrical Poems**: often of great beauty; e.g. the songs of Callicles in *Empedocles on Etna*, *Requiescat*, *The Forsaken Merman*, the poems to Marguerite, the best passages of *Tristram and Iseult*, and several fine sonnets.

(iv) **Literary Criticism**: the *Essays in Criticism* the most helpful book of the period on the proper approach to literature; emphasizes the need of disinterestedness, of a sufficiently wide culture, of constant appeal to high standards; in the first series are stimulating essays on the Literary Influence of Academies, Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment, Heine, the Guérins, Joubert, Spinoza, Marcus Aurelius; in the second series are essays on *The Study of Poetry*, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Tolstoi, Amiel. *The Celtic Literature* was a valuable stimulus to the study of the Celtic element in English; his work on *Homer* is excellent in general principles, but unfortunate in practical application.

(v) **Religion**: best seen in *Literature and Dogma*, a plea for the study of the bible in the spirit of great literature, free from dogmatic prepossessions; serious, witty, eloquent; in *St. Paul and Protestantism*, he attacks the narrow spirit of dissent, its lack of "culture"; he was a Churchman by instinct, but felt the force of the attacks on dogma; would save Christianity at the expense of its doctrines.

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

(c) **Characteristics**: An urbane and genial critic of our social institutions ; a steady foe of philistinism ; a moderate Liberal in politics ; a reformer in education ; his prose enlivened by humour, wit, irony, but informed by learning and culture ; his poetry too dominantly plaintive, lacking the lightness of his prose ; scholarly, and finished in form ; pure in diction ; memorable in phrase ; within his limits, and in expressing the unsatisfied longings of his time it was supreme.

**Arthur Hugh Clough** (1819-61) : friend of Arnold and, like him, a Rugby and Oxford man ; shared and expressed Arnold's religious doubts ; his most important poem, *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, 1848—humorous, serious, dealing with problems of the day in rough hexameters ; more hopeful than Arnold, and more simply human ; *Easter Day* a significant religious poem ; "Say not the struggle nought availeth" and "Where lies the Land," short poems, expressing his brave hope as well as his doubts.

## IV. THE PRE-RAPHAELITE GROUP

**Pre-Raphaelitism** essentially a movement against conventionalism in Art ; its aim to represent the truth in colour, sculpture, or poetry ; the truth to be spiritually seen ; involved a return to romance, to mediævalism, to frankness and sensuousness of treatment, to a cult of beauty as "the one thing needful" in Art, to a deepened sense of the religious purpose of Art. Among the painters were Rossetti, Millais, Burne-Jones, Holman Hunt ; among the sculptors Thomas Woolner ; Ruskin's teaching had the same direction ; Rossetti's poems and the early work of Morris and Swinburne represent the best of the school in literature.

**Dante Gabriel Rossetti** (1828-82) : great as painter and poet ; son of Italian parents, but an Englishman ; his interest in Italy artistic, not political ; *The Germ*, 1850, a periodical devoted to the ideas of the P.R. Brotherhood, contained contributions from Rossetti, including *The Blessed Damozel* ; married Elizabeth Siddal, 1860 ; published translations from early Italian poets in *Dante and his Circle*, 1861 ; lost his wife and buried

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the MS of his poems in her tomb, 1862 ; allowed them to be exhumed and published, 1870 ; attacked by Buchanan in *The Fleshly School of Poetry*, 1871—a strong but not wholly unfair condemnation of his method ; took to chloral, and lost his mental serenity ; *Ballads and Sonnets*, 1881.

His poems divide themselves into three groups :

(i) **Lyrical Poems** : in which a dreamy supersensuous effect is produced by means of beautiful sensuous imagery, by emphasizing the brilliance of light and colour, by suggesting much more than is said ; e.g. *The Blessed Damozel*, *Love's Nocturn*, *The Staff and Srip*, *The Stream's Secret*.

(ii) **The Sonnets** : especially the sequence, *The House of Life* ; an idealization of love ; many of them very fine ; cloying and over-luscious as a whole.

(iii) **Ballads** : most of them written late in life ; realistic, and eerie in their effect ; inspired by Coleridge ; e.g. *Rose Mary*, *Sister Helen*, *Jenny*, *The White Ship*, *The King's Tragedy*. At his best in these poems, where his artistic mysticism is held in check by the claims of a real story. He was a poet with the instinct of a painter.

**Christina Rossetti** (1830-94) : sister of the last-named ; differed from him in her aims ; her lyrics show a perfect artistry—the spontaneous songs of a pure mind ; her fancy has a childlike charm ; her pathos simple and genuine ; her love of nature true and deep ; her religious devotion a rapture of ecstatic faith like that of a mediæval nun ; for the expression of this piety in beautiful poems she is supreme in her time.

Among her most characteristic poems are—*Goblin Market*, 1862 ; *The Prince's Progress*, 1866 ; *Annus Domini*—a prayer for each day—1874 ; *The Months—A Pageant*, 1879 ; *Monna Innominata*—a sequence of love-sonnets—1881 ; and such short poems as “When I am dead, my dearest,” *Life and Death*, *The Green Cornfield*, *Dream-Love*, etc.

**William Morris** (1834-96) : “poet, artist, manufacturer and socialist” ; educated at Marlborough and Oxford, where he became the friend of Burne-Jones ; came under the influence of Carlyle (*Past and Present*; *Heroes*), Ruskin (art and mediævalism), and Rossetti (1854—pre-Raphaelitism) ; wrote poems in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine, 1856 ; published *The Defence of Guinevere*, and other poems, 1858 ; married, 1859, and started his work in the designing of wall-papers,

## AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

etc. ; put into practice the artistic ideals of Ruskin with practical success ; began to take an interest in social questions ; *The Life and Death of Jason*, 1867 ; *The Earthly Paradise*, 1868-70 ; visited Iceland 1871, 1873, and Italy, 1872 ; *Love is enough*, 1873 ; translated the *Aeneid*, 1876 ; had also helped to translate Norse sagas before bringing out *Sigurd the Volsung*, 1877 ; lectured and wrote on Art and Socialism, 1877-89 ; wrote occasional poems in *Chants for Socialists*, 1883-9 ; left the Socialist League, 1890 ; his later work, utopian romances in fanciful, semi-poetic prose—*The House of the Wulfrings*, 1889 ; *News from Nowhere*, 1891 ; *The Well at the World's End*, 1896 ; *The Story of the Sundering Flood*, 1898 (posthumous).

Morris's early views on art coloured his life ; his socialism grew out of them and widened his vision ; he wished to make the artisan an artist delighting in his work ; hence his enthusiasm for the Middle Ages, his artistic tapestries, and the Kelmscott Press. In his poetry he seems a dreamer out of touch with life, till the Norse sagas took possession of him ; essentially a romancer : hence his share in translating the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, *Beowulf*, and the Norse sagas ; a strong admirer of Chaucer, but without his humour ; the chivalrous and knightly elements of mediævalism fascinated him.

**The Defence of Guinevere** : not a great poem, but in comparison with Tennyson, it is cast in the true spirit of mediæval romance, its morality not modernized.

**The Earthly Paradise** : a series of tales inspired by Chaucer and Boccaccio ; mostly taken from classical or Norse sources ; diffuse but easy-flowing narratives, without outstanding passages ; *Jason* in spirit one of them ; entirely romantic in treatment.

**Sigurd the Volsung** : his greatest poem ; in long, resounding lines ; full of fire and vigour ; recalling the very breath of the Nibelungen saga.

**The songs** : often terse, vivid, inspiring ; democratic in tone, as contrasted with the essentially aristocratic atmosphere of the romances.

**Algernon Charles Swinburne** (1837-1909) : of good family ; educated at Eton and Oxford ; became the friend of Morris and Burne-Jones ; came under the influence of Rossetti (1857), but did not succumb to it ;

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drew his "romance" from the Elizabethan dramatists and Victor Hugo, more than from the Middle Ages; knew Greek well: hence fused classicism with romance; published his first work (two plays), 1861; *Atalanta in Calydon*, 1865; *Chastelard*, 1865; *Poems and Ballads*, I, 1866—received with some disfavour on account of the too frank sensuousness of some of the poems; *A Song of Italy*, 1867; *Songs before Sunrise*, 1871; *Bothwell*, 1874; *Songs of Two Nations*, 1875; *Erechtheus*, 1876; *Poems and Ballads*, II, 1878; *Studies in Song*; *Songs of the Springtides*, 1880; *Mary Stuart*, 1881; *Tristram of Lyonesse*, 1882; *A Century of Roundels*, 1883; *A Midsummer Holiday*, 1884; *Marino Faliero*, 1885; *Poems and Ballads*, III, 1889; *Astrophel*, 1894; *The Tale of Balen*, 1896; *Rosamund, Queen of the Lombards*, 1899; *A Channel Passage*, 1904; besides much prose, including studies on Blake (1868), Chapman (1875), Shakespeare (1880), Ben Jonson (1889), Victor Hugo (1894) and *Love's Cross Currents*, 1905, "a year's letters." This immense amount of work all of high quality; showing a marvellous skill in all forms of verse, especially in the variety of lyrical metres; a riotous abundance of rich words; an unflagging enthusiasm for love and liberty; an inexhaustible facility in rime and epithet; a voluble presentment of modern ideas, untouched by his predecessors; the most powerful influence on succeeding poets. His exuberant eloquence irresistible; but excessive, and lacking in restraint; often great, but rarely reaching the "grand style." As a lyrist and a poet of freedom comparable with Shelley and Hugo; in his rich excess of beauty with Keats; in his command of metre with Milton.

**Dramas:** *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erechtheus* on the model of Greek tragedy; the former a very great poem throughout, and especially in the choruses; the most successful "Greek" drama in English since Milton's *Samson*. In the romantic dramas, e.g. the *Mary Stuart* trilogy, Swinburne gives us the abundance of the Elizabethans without their intensity; the speeches are too long; the dramatic sense lost.

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**Poems and Ballads:** contain much very fine work ; the *Hymn to Proserpine*, *Itylus*, *A Song in time of Order*, *A Song in time of Revolution*, *In Memory of W. S. Landor*, the *Garden of Proserpine*, *Dolores*, as well as *Laus Veneris* and other erotic poems occur in the first series ; the later series contain *Songs of Four Seasons*, translations from *Villon*, and a rich harvest of fine lyrics.

**Songs before Sunrise :** perhaps his best volume ; here we see the best of the poet : his passion for liberty, his lyrical touch with modern thought, his love of Italy, his finest music ; here are *Hertha*, *The Litany of Nations*, *Super Flumina Babylonis*, the *Hymn of Man*, *Mater Triumphalis*, *Perinde ac Cadaver*, *Tiresias* and other fine lyrics ; besides the *Song to Italy*, a splendid pæan, perhaps over long, dedicated to Mazzini ; and the poem on France, first included in the *Songs of Two Nations*. No poet has obtained more majestic lyrical effects, more elaborate harmonies, than are to be found here.

**Arthurian poems:** attempts to tell the tales as mediæval romances ; his genius did not lie in narrative ; excursions and descriptive digressions too long, but often very beautiful ; *Tristram of Lyonesse* in sweet and smooth heroic couplets ; contains some fine sea-passages ; *Balen*, in simpler metre, superior to Tennyson's idyll.

**Prose :** has the same faults and qualities as the poetry ; overloaded with epithet and emphasis ; his criticism always makes for the right direction ; he wrote greatly on the greater men, but was apt to praise too highly such men as Webster and Chapman, where temperate language is called for.

"He was a disinterested enthusiast, and Beauty was never celebrated in purer or more rapturous music."—GOSSE.

**Coventry Patmore (1823-96) :** a poet severely independent of outside influences, touches the new romantic movement on its mediæval religious side and in the complex sensuousness of his best verse ; author of *The Angel in the House* (1854-6), a poetic celebration of the glories of wedded love, in simple octosyllabic verse, wrought with much skill and seriousness ; and *The Unknown Eros* (1877), a collection of stately odes dealing with Love in a transcendental and Catholic spirit ; splendid music, but intricate thought ; to him Art, i.e. Poetry, was a sacred thing, the servant of religion.

**Francis Thompson (1859-1907) :** the poetic heir of Patmore, failed to become a very great poet through taking to opium in early years ; under the care of friends (Mr. and Mrs. Meynell) he produced *Poems*, 1893 ; *Sister Songs*, 1895 ; *New Poems*, 1897 ; wrote reviews for the *Athenæum*, etc., and various essays, in-

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cluding a fine one on Shelley; a master of the complex ode—e.g. the *Hound of Heaven*, the very quintessence of Catholic mysticism; also wrote beautiful love poems—e.g. *Love in Dian's Lap*; occasionally wrote well in simple vein, but was generally over-ornate, fond of unusual words and complicated imagery.

## V. MISCELLANEOUS POETS

**Edward Fitzgerald** (1809–83): lived the life of a recluse in Suffolk, reading much but doing little original work; wrote *Euphranor*, 1851, a graceful prose dialogue; translated *Six Dramas of Calderon*, 1853, and the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, 1859; was a friend of Tennyson, Thackeray, Carlyle, and other famous men; some of his delightful letters were printed after his death. His fame rests on the *Omar*, a transfusion of the Persian astronomer-poet, so complete as to give the effect of an original work; its tone of epicurean melancholy and its matchless rhythm combine to make it one of the most haunting poems in the language.

**James Thomson** ("B. V.": 1834–82): a pessimist of another type, soured by a hard life and driven to his death by drink; remembered by *The City of Dreadful Night*, 1874—published in Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*—a terrible picture of sustained gloom and despair; brighter in *The Lord of the Castle of Indolence*, 1859, and *Sunday up the River*, 1869; darkness dominant again in *Insomnia*, 1882; his *nom de plume*—"Bysshe Vanolis"—reveals in Shelley and Novalis the springs of his inspiration. With him we associate two other poets who were unfortunate: the blind **Philip Bourke Marston** (1850–87), author of some pleasant lyrics; and **John Davidson** (1857–1909), author of *Fleet Street Eclogues*, 1893–5, and some excellent ballads and songs.

**Minor Poets.** Very numerous; many accomplished writers, producing good but not great work; often felicitous in short passages; occasionally rising to a flash of greatness; but falling short on the whole.

**Philip James Bailey** (1816–1902): *Festus*, 1839, an ambitious epic, once highly thought of.

**Richard Hengist Horne** (1803–84): *Orion*, 1843, an epic, readable for its tale.

**R. Monekton Milnes**, Lord Houghton (1805–85): author of some graceful occasional verse.

**William Edmondstone Aytoun** (1813–65): excellent ballads in *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*, 1848.

**Robert Stephen Hawker** (1803–75): the poet of Cornwall.

**Sir Francis Hastings Doyle** (1810–88): a scholar, and poet successful in the heroic ballad of action.

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**Richard Harris Barham** (1788–1845) : the author of the clever and vivacious *Ingoldsby Legends*, 1837.

**Thomas Gordon Hake** (1809–95) : friend and follower of Rossetti ; *New Symbols*, 1876.

**Sydney Dobell** (1824–74) : chief poet of the “Spasmodic” school ; *The Roman*, 1850 ; *Balder*, 1854 ; shows real power, in fitful glimpses ; extravagant style ; over-emphasis ; redundancy ; but an interesting man.

**Alexander Smith** (1829–66) : *A Life Drama*, 1852 ; “spasmodic.”

**Richard Watson Dixon** (1833–1900) : friend of Morris ; pre-Raphaelite, but with more condensation than most of the Brotherhood.

**Lord de Tabley** (1835–95) : a scholarly poet, accomplished, but not very original ; neglected till his works were collected and issued in two volumes, 1893, 1895. Similar in tone, but occasionally touched by his Irish ancestry was **Aubrey de Vere** (1814–1902), acceptable in many styles ; and the Hon. Roden Noel (1834–94), a steady and even craftsman.

**Arthur O’Shaughnessy** (1844–91) : an Irishman with more pre-Raphaelite in him than Celt ; *An Epic of Women*, 1870 ; *Songs of a Worker*, 1881 ; successful lyrist.

**Robert Buchanan** (1841–1901) : wrote dramas, critiques, novels : *London Poems*, 1866 ; and *The Book of Orm*, 1870, contain his best poetry ; a realist ; opponent of pre-Raphaelitism ; poetic inspirer of the Gaelic revival.

**William Barnes** (1801–86) : a schoolmaster and clergyman ; brought out three collections of poems in the Dorset dialect, 1844, 1850, 1863 ; a careful stylist ; not a Dorsetshire Burns ; a real nature-poet, quiet and reposeful in tone.

**Charles Stuart Calverley** (1831–84) : the best of our parodists ; **Frederick Locker-Lampson** (1821–95), author of *London Lyrics*, 1857 ; the heir of Praed ; **James Kenneth Stephen** (1859–92) : *Lapsus Calami*, 1891 ; and **Sir W. S. Gilbert** (1836–1911) : *Bab Ballads*, (4 series, 1868–87) ; must be mentioned for their humorous poems.

Other names worthy of record are : **William Cory** (1823–92) ; the second **Lord Lytton** (1834–91) ; **Sir Alfred Lyall** (1835–1911) for his Indian poems ; **Jean Ingelow** (1820–97) ; **Theodore Watts-Dunton** (1836–1914) for *The Coming of Love* and some fine sonnets ; and **Sir Edwin Arnold** (1832–1904), **Alfred Austin** (1835–1913) and **Sir Lewis Morris** (1834–1907) as fluent versifiers without authentic inspiration.

**William Ernest Henley** (1849–1903) : brings us to the verge of the new age ; a life-long invalid, he was a man of indomitable courage ; edited several magazines ; wrote much criticism

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of a stimulating kind ; rough and uncompromising, but catholic ; as a poet, clear and bold in thought ; fastidious in workmanship ; inspired by London streets in *London Voluntaries*, 1888-92 ; should also be remembered by *In a Hospital* ; *The Song of the Sword* ; *The Dying Stoic* ("Out of the night that covers me"), *Pro Rege Nostro* ; patriotic, unconventional, realistic.

**Ernest Dowson** (1867-1900) : was unfortunate in his life, and his lyrics have a sad note ; but some have a chaste beauty which causes regret for his short life.

**Lionel Johnson** (1867-1902) : published *Poems*, 1895, and *Ireland*, 1897 ; a real poet with a wistful lyrical note ; celebrated his school and college in pleasant poems ; was a Catholic and a lover of Celtic things : his verse reflects both aspects of his character, chastened by scholarship.

**James Elroy Flecker** (1884-1915) : a young poet who died early of consumption ; took poetry seriously and worked at it severely ; his verse excellent in form and finish ; *The Bridge of Fire*, 1907 ; and *The Golden Journey to Samarsand*, 1913, display his highly cultivated talent at its best.

**Rupert Brooke** (1887-1915) : probably the strongest and most promising of our newer poets ; educated at Rugby and Cambridge, he published his first volume of poems, 1911 ; wrote other poems, some while on a journey in the Pacific, 1913 ; joined the R.N.V.R., and served at Antwerp, 1914 ; died of blood-poisoning at Lemnos, 1915 ; his poems express his own moods in well-known metres, with sincerity and distinction ; his war-sonnets express the spirit of the patriotic volunteer ; especially fine is the last—"If I should die, think only this of me."

## C. General Prose Writers

### I. THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881)

(a) **Life** : Born at Ecclefechan, the son of a stonemason, whose hard Calvinism, rugged temper, vivid speech, and essential goodness strongly influenced his son ; was educated at Edinburgh University, 1809-14 ; became a teacher of mathematics, 1814 ; came to Edinburgh and did articles for Brewster's *Encyclopædia*, and other hack-work, 1818-22 ; went to London, and contributed his *Life of Schiller* to the *London Magazine*, 1823-4 ; married Jane Welsh, 1826 ; contributed articles on German literature to reviews, 1827 ; received a letter from Goethe, 1827 ; at Craigenputtock, 1828-34 ; *Sartor Resartus*, appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1833-4 ;

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praised only by Emerson ; came to London and settled at No. 5 (now 24) Cheyne Row, 1834 ; completed *The French Revolution*, 1837 ; gradually obtained fame and recognition ; wrote on political subjects, and gave lectures ; continued his historical work ; was Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, 1866 ; his wife died, 1866 ; did no further work of importance, and died at his Chelsea home, 1881 ; buried at Ecclefechan.

(b) **Works** : *Life of Schiller*, 1823-4 ; translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, 1824 ; *Essays on German writers*, 1827-32 ; *Essays on Burns, Johnson, Voltaire, etc.*, 1828-34 ; *Sartor Resartus*, 1833 ; *The French Revolution*, 1837 ; *Chartism*, 1839 ; *Heroes and Hero Worship*, 1841 ; *Past and Present*, 1843 ; *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, 1845 ; *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, 1850 ; *Life of Sterling*, 1851 ; *History of Frederick the Great*, 1858-65.

**Life of Schiller** : a plain narrative, in simple and direct style ; with a sympathetic account of his work. **The Life of Sterling** an even better biography.

**Literary Essays** : excellent on German writers such as Goethe, Richter, Novalis, the Nibelungenlied ; did much to bring their exceptional qualities to English notice ; attracted by their seriousness and by their philosophy ; his advice—close your Byron and open your Goethe ; on English writers good when he is sympathetic (Burns), but is impatient of such men as Scott and Coleridge whom he did not understand.

**Past and Present** : the best of the group of political writings ; contains an admirable account of Abbot Samson and his reforms at Bury, based on the Chronicle of Jocelyn of Brakelonde ; its lessons applied to the politics of his day ; inveighs against corn-laws, laissez-faire, mammonism, sansculottism, ballot-boxes, and the hopes of democracy ; calls for a real " king "—a spiritual leader who, like Abbot Samson, is also a strong man ; Carlyle a Radical who believed in autocracy.

**Heroes** : six lectures, on the hero as Divinity (Odin) as Prophet (Mahomet), as Priest (Luther), as Poet (Dante, Shakespeare), as Man of Letters (Rousseau, Johnson, Burns), as King (Cromwell, Napoleon) ; exaggerates the influence of individual great men ; yet full of insight, imaginative thought, spiritual fire.

**Histories** : characterized by (a) laborious accuracy, derived from conscientious study of original sources, (b) great imaginative power of presenting character and events ;

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the method brilliantly successful ; Carlyle has made his periods live as truly in their spiritual aspect as in their external features ; *The French Revolution* reads like a romance ; *Cromwell* changed the general opinion of its hero ; *Frederick* is still honoured as a history and as a great book.

**Sartor Resartus** : a masterpiece of imaginative prose ; contains Carlyle's spiritual autobiography, disguised in the opinions of Teufelsdröckh ; to all who understand the meaning of the Everlasting No, stimulating and encouraging in the highest degree ; humorous, fantastic, grotesque—yet intensely serious ; a " Titan's rhapsody."

(c) **Characteristics** : Obtained recognition late, and only after a hard struggle ; hence often harsh and impatient with opposition or difference of opinion ; sensitive and outspoken ; unable to hide the truth, as he saw it ; a brilliant and witty talker ; poetic in his habit of thought ; dictatorial and self-wrapped ; the weak side of him shown in his domestic relations, especially in the little things of life, in Froude's *Life* ; among his friends were Jeffrey, Mill, Mazzini, John Sterling, Tennyson, Browning, Ruskin, John Forster, and especially Emerson, Tyndall, Froude ; made enemies of Mill, Mazzini, and many others by sheer lack of comprehension ; did much visiting among the aristocracy during his successful years ; interfered in politics, on the side of the strong rule of law and order ; opposed negro emancipation and Irish claims ; supported the protest against Governor Eyre's impeachment, 1866 ; admired with reserves Gladstone, Disraeli, Peel, Bright ; condemned Napoleon III and the " gibbering French " ; extolled Bismarck, and the strong, solid Teuton ; his political opinions inspired by ethical or spiritual motives ; in religion, austere as a Calvinist, but uninfluenced by dogma ; a pantheist, with Christian ethics infused ; violently against materialism ; with all his faults, a brave, strong soul, who passed through turbid waters and never saw lucid skies ; who never wrote a book without great wrestlings of the spirit ; a life-long fighter for the principle of right as might, for good against evil. Mrs. Carlyle almost as witty and more

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sarcastic than he ; a strange, self-willed woman, yet loyal, and proudly conscious of her husband's greatness, as is clearly brought out by Froude.

(d) **Influence**: The greatest prose-writer of his epoch ; his style like himself—rugged, eloquent, explosive, poetic, unique, and inimitable ; wrong in many things—e.g. in his attitude to science, in his political prophesying, in many literary judgments ; yet honoured as a prophet—among men of science like Tyndall, Huxley ; among men of other aims like Kingsley and Ruskin ; especially in Germany and America, where Emerson discerned his greatness from the first. The letters between him and Emerson a delightful memorial to their friendship. He opened German literature to England ; preached always his hatred of shams, his gospel of work and of sincerity ; died, the venerated prophet of his generation.

## II. JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900)

(a) **Life** : Born in London, only son of Scottish parents : his father a well-to-do wine merchant ; his mother a stern Calvinist ; his exceptional talents early recognized by his parents ; encouraged in his love of art, nature and literature ; brought up with too much care, sheltered from the world and from companions ; educated poorly by private tutors ; made his first visit to the Alps, 1833 ; went to Oxford, 1837 ; had already written much prose and verse ; won the Newdigate prize, 1839, but realized that poetry was not his gift ; obtained his degree, 1842 ; published the first volume of *Modern Painters*, 1843 ; visited Italy alone, 1845, and made his first acquaintance with early Italian Art and Venice ; married Euphemia Gray, 1848 [separated in 1853 : she married Sir John Millais] ; lived at Denmark Hill with his parents till 1871 ; defended the pre-Raphaelites, 1851 ; began his career as public lecturer, 1853 ; joined F. D. Maurice at the Working Men's College, 1854 ; began *Unto this Last* in the *Cornhill*, 1860 ; the articles badly received, because of their economic heresies ; inherited a large fortune from his father, 1864 ; gave the lectures *Sesame and Lilies*, at Manchester, 1864 ; joined Carlyle in defence of Governor Eyre, 1867 ; became Slade Professor of Fine

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Art at Oxford, 1869 ; went to live at Brantwood, 1871 ; started the Guild of St. George, 1871 : ultimately gave most of his fortune to this and similar social experiments ; attacked by brain fever, 1878, from the effects of which he never fully recovered ; resigned his professorship, 1879 ; reappointed, 1883 ; resigned finally in disgust at the foundation of a school of physiology, 1884 ; began *Præterita*, 1885 ; and gradually sank into a serene old age.

(b) **Works** : *Modern Painters* (I, 1843 ; II, 1846 ; III-IV, 1856 ; V, 1860) ; *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 1849 ; *The Stones of Venice*, 1851-3 ; *Elements of Drawing*, 1857—practical notes for the students at the Working Men's College ; *The Political Economy of Art*—lectures at Manchester, 1857 ; *The Two Paths*, 1859 ; *Unto this Last*, 1862 ; *Munera Pulveris*—part in *Fraser*, 1862—complete, dedicated to Carlyle, 1872 ; *Sesame and Lilies*, 1865 ; *Ethics of the Dust*, 1865—talks to girls on crystals ; *The Crown of Wild Olive*, 1866—a collection of lectures on Work, Traffic, War, etc. ; *Time and Tide*, 1867—letters to a working-man at Sunderland ; *The Queen of the Air*, 1869—lectures on Greek Myths ; *Lectures on Art*, 1870 ; *Aratra Pentelici*, 1870 ; *The Eagle's Nest*, 1872 ; *Love's Meinie*, 1873 ; *Val d'Arno*, 1873 ; *The Art of England*, 1873 ; *Fors Clavigera*, 1871-84 ; *Præterita*, 1885-9.

**Modern Painters** : written to exalt the art of Turner as the greatest painter of England for sincerity and fidelity to nature ; extended to include the art of the early Italians ; a noble plea for high ideals in art ; an exposition of true principles in a rich and ornate prose, fertile in imagination and of inexhaustible eloquence ; great descriptive passages ; high moral enthusiasm.

**The Seven Lamps of Architecture** : carried the same ideas into architecture ; the “ seven lamps ” are Truth, Beauty, Power, Sacrifice, Obedience, Labour, Memory ; treated with ingenious originality ; the style even more ornate and fantastic ; the manner more paradoxical and aggressive ; the ideas stimulating and in the main just.

**The Stones of Venice** : his best book—less discursive, less ornate, less flamboyant than the previous two ; its aim to show the intimate connexion between the buildings of Venice and its history ; his exact knowledge insufficient ; this counteracted by genius and moral insight ; a “ sermon in stones ” (Carlyle) : preaching the necessity of a happy life for the workman if great art is desired.

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**Unto this Last** : the first and the best of his books on political economy ; no such science deemed possible if the individuality, the soul, of the worker is ignored.

**Sesame and Lilies** : two lectures—"King's Treasuries," on the right use of books ; "Queen's Gardens" on the education of girls ; eloquent and stimulating ; full of fine thoughts, finely expressed.

**Oxford Lectures** : dealt with art, only as illustrative of his social and ethical ideas ; fanciful, wayward, provoking, irregular, but having the accent of a modern Isaiah, gifted with overflow of rich words, a keen irony, a discursive mind : *The Eagle's Nest* and *Love's Meinie* may be chosen.

**Fors Clavigera** : 96 letters to all and sundry, issued as separate pamphlets ; a wild chaos of criticism of modern life ; bitterly satirical, but incurably optimistic ; the language simple and easy, without the early florid gush ; intensely sincere ; a rain of great thoughts, mingled with violent prejudices, impractical schemes, unjust attacks on all who differed from him ; yet a constant impulse to higher ideals of public and private virtue.

**Præterita** : an autobiography, of great interest and psychological value.

(c) **Characteristics** : Ruskin's early training was a disadvantage : it made him egotistical, self-willed, dogmatic, impatient of contradiction ; left him unacquainted with the rough ways of practical life ; like Carlyle, he abandoned Puritan dogmas, but never lost their stamp ; a believer in God and His goodness, without other dogmas ; as a mediævalist, he was a lover of Scott and Catholic Art, and disliked Gothic and the Renaissance ; like Carlyle, he hated science, mechanism, and materialism—misunderstood Mill—had no belief in democratic equality or political freedom—was essentially a "voice crying in the wilderness" ; a lover of truth, he disliked method and meticulous accuracy of fact ; in his own eyes his life was a failure : hence the *sæva indignatio*, bitter but never cynical, of *Fors* ; as a moralist, had a pure zeal for righteousness, a love of purity and justice, a passionate desire that peace, beauty and love should be in the soul of all men ; as a writer, one of our greatest imaginative prosemen—often gorgeous, sublime, brilliant : even when his ideas are

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most perverse, chaotic, and self-contradictory—lucid, eloquent, compelling attention.

(d) **Influence**: Joins hands with Carlyle as the prophet and ethical teacher of his day ; his influence on the public conscience not yet exhausted ; many of his political ideas now in practical working ; his autocratic theories a barrier between him and many of the leaders of the workmen—but not impassable ; as an art critic, the general trend of his work has become almost commonplace, even when details are scoffed at ; his support of pre-Raphaelitism links him with Rossetti and Pater.

## III. HISTORIANS

**General Characteristics.** More complete analysis of facts ; study of all available documents ; a more severe critical method ; tendency to more narrow specialism ; interest in origins of history ; result : a more literary treatment and consecutive narrative, including the whole life of the period treated.

**Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59)** : educated at Cambridge ; fellow of Trinity, 1824 ; wrote his first essay in the *Edinburgh* (on Milton), 1825 ; called to the Bar, 1826 ; M.P. for Calne, 1830 ; soon made a reputation by his eloquent and well-informed speeches ; legal member of the supreme council of India, 1834–8 ; secretary for war, 1839 ; *Lays of Ancient Rome*, 1842 ; defeated at Edinburgh, 1847 ; retired from politics and devoted himself to history ; again M.P., 1852–6 ; raised to the peerage, 1857. His **History of England** published in three instalments, 1849, 1855, 1861 ; his greatest work ; a brilliant narrative, biased by Whiggism ; full, learned, always readable, never dull ; shows a complete mastery of the facts ; an orator's skill in language ; rich in splendid rhetoric, though without Carlyle's poetic lightning. The **Essays** have similar merits ; ample knowledge—a full, flowing style—an easy command of illustrative facts—a commonplace morality couched in ornate words : e.g. those on Clive, Hastings, Bacon, Horace Walpole, Boswell's *Life of Johnson* ; great learning made easy and familiar. The **Poems**, vigorous, metallic in rhythm, but in the

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right spirit ; not great, but good : e.g. *Horatius*, *Ivry*, *The Spanish Armada*, *The Battle of Naseby*.

**James Anthony Froude** (1818-94) : son of a clergyman ; went to Oriel College, Oxford, 1836 ; came under the influence of Newman ; ordained as deacon, 1845, but much disturbed by religious doubts ; became acquainted with Carlyle, 1848 ; expressed his heterodoxy in *The Nemesis of Faith*, 1849, a novel ; lost his fellowship and suffered much for his opinions ; edited *Fraser's Magazine*, 1861-74 ; published *Short Studies in Great Subjects*, 1867-83—admirable essays, showing considerable knowledge and skill in the use of it ; the *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, 1856-70—a full account of the English Reformation, biased and inaccurate, but written in a vivid, interesting style, alive and dramatic ; *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, 1872-4 ; *Bunyan*, 1880 ; *Life of Carlyle*, 1882-4, vitiated by too much frankness, even inaccuracy, but intensely interesting ; *Oceana*, 1886—an enthusiastic vision of the British Empire, inspired by a journey to Australia ; *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy*, 1889—a historical novel ; *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, 1894 ; *Lectures on the Council of Trent*, 1896 ; and other works, mainly historical ; all unreliable in detail and sometimes in general impression ; yet always written in a clear, attractive prose.

**Ancient Historians.** Following Niebuhr and Mommsen, we have in England to record the *History of Rome* of **Thomas Arnold** (1795-1842), the headmaster of Rugby, written before Mommsen's history and in some sense supplanted by it ; the *History of Greece* by **Connop Thirlwall** (1797-1875), bishop of St. David's which was thrown into the shade by the monumental work of **George Grote** (1794-1871), a banker who gave his whole leisure to the work—a democratic Radical, who entered into the very soul of his subject from all sides. **George Finlay** (1799-1875) carried on the subject from the conquest of Greece by the Romans to 1864.

**English Historians.** Special periods have received competent treatment from **Edward Augustus Freeman** (1823-92) in his *History of the Norman Conquest*, 1867-79 ; **Samuel Rawson**

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**Gardiner** (1829–1902) in the period of the Early Stuarts ; and Bishop **William Stubbs** (1825–1901) in his learned *Constitutional History of England*, 1874–8. **John Richard Green** (1837–83) was a better writer, suggestive and original in *The Making of England*, 1881, and *The Conquest of England*, 1883 ; and showed himself a master of brilliant condensation in his *Short History of the English People*, 1874. **Sir John Robert Seeley** (1834–95), professor of Modern History at Cambridge, from 1869 ; wrote two books on religion—*Ecce Homo*, 1865 ; and *Natural Religion*, 1882—unorthodox in opinion but reverent in tone ; was a stimulating lecturer and writer on history ; did much to awaken interest in the empire with *The Expansion of England*, 1883, and *The Growth of British Policy*, 1895.

**William Edward Hartpole Lecky** (1838–1903) : an Irishman, educated at Trinity College, Dublin ; had a philosophical interest in history ; lucid in style ; dignified and impartial ; at his best in the *Rise and Progress of Rationalism in Europe*, 1865 ; *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, 1869 ; *Democracy and Liberty*, 1896 : liberal in thought, but conservative in its foundations ; his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, 1878–90, is his monument in pure history—a broad and philosophic work.

**Alexander William Kinglake** (1809–91) : made a journey to the East, upon which he based *Eōthen*, 1844, a charmingly personal book of travel ; accompanied our army to the Crimea in the suite of Lord Raglan, and wrote *Invasion of the Crimea*, 1863–87, an account in minute detail of the campaigns ; not impartial or philosophic ; a picturesque and easy narrative.

**Frederick William Maitland** (1850–1906) : professor of Law at Cambridge, wrote important works on the history of Law ; the most interesting and valuable—*Roman Canon Law in the Church of England*, 1898, technical and full of learning ; but well-written and by no means dry.

## IV. THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

**John Henry Newman** (1801–90) : the leading figure in the Oxford Tractarian movement ; a fellow of Oriel ; vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford ; attracted many young men by his *Sermons* ; visited the Mediterranean, 1832–3, and wrote many of the poems in *Lyra Apostolica*, including “Lead, kindly Light” ; *Tracts for the Times*, 1833–41 ; appearance of Tract XC, and removal of Newman from Oxford, 1841 ; *Essay on Miracles*, 1843 ; joined the Church of Rome, 1845 ; *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1845 ; *Loss and Gain*, 1848—a story ;

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*University Sketches*, 1852-8 ; *Callista* 1856—a historical tale ; *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1864—a reply to Kingsley's charge of insincerity, a fine piece of autobiography and defence of his position, the justification of the whole movement ; *The Dream of Gerontius*, 1865—a religious drama, genuinely poetical ; *The Grammar of Assent*, 1870 ; accepted the doctrine of papal infallibility, 1870 ; was made Cardinal, 1879 ; and died at the Oratory, Birmingham, 1890. A great prose-writer, with fine gifts of irony and passion ; sophist in his reasoning, and self-deceived, but transparently sincere ; his aim to combat liberal rationalism by means of authority.

The Oxford Movement produced much learning but little literature : **Edward Bouverie Pusey** (1800-82) ; **Cardinal Manning** (1808-92) ; **Cardinal Wiseman** (1802-65) ; **W. G. Ward** (1812-82). **Richard Hurrell Froude** (1803-36) died too young to fulfil his promise ; he accompanied Newman on his journey of 1832-3. The object of the movement to see the soul in things ; it influenced most of the orthodox thinkers, and left traces on the thoughts of others.

**Richard William Church** (1815-89) : dean of St. Paul's, was in close touch with Newman, and wrote *The Oxford Movement* (publ. 1891), our best account of the events of 1841-5 ; a charming and graceful writer ; catholic in his sympathies ; wrote a life of St. Anselm, 1870 ; and well-balanced and just monographs on Spenser, 1879 ; and Bacon, 1884.

**Frederick Denison Maurice** (1805-72) : the most conspicuous "liberal" theologian ; a Christian socialist ; a powerful personal force ; ejected from his professorship of theology at University College, 1853 ; accepted as professor of morals at Cambridge, 1866 ; a follower of Coleridge, he hesitated between the orthodox and rational camps, trusting to neither fully ; hence the misty and uncertain haze about his writings : e.g. *The Kingdom of Christ*, 1838 ; *Prophets and Kings*, 1853 ; *The Claims of the Bible and of Science*, 1863.

**Essays and Reviews**, 1860 : seven articles on theological subjects by members of the Church of England ; took a strong position on the rational side of belief ; two of the contributors : **Benjamin Jowett** (1817-93), afterwards master of Balliol and translator of Plato ; and **Mark Pattison** (1813-84), master

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of Lincoln, a distinguished scholar and writer ; both men of influence at Oxford.

**Arthur Penrhyn Stanley** (1815-81) : pupil and biographer of Dr. Arnold, and dean of Westminster, was also a man of broad views ; wrote well on religious history, e.g. *The History of the Jewish Church*, 1863-5.

**John Stuart Mill** (1806-73) : son of the philosopher, James Mill ; was cradled into philosophy ; became the leader of the utilitarian school ; edited and wrote for the *London Review* ; M.P. for Westminster, 1865-8. Chief Works : *System of Logic*, 1843—a lucid and thorough book which had great influence ; *Political Economy*, 1848—safe, but original ; *On Liberty*, 1859—a brilliant essay, subdued but enthusiastic and practical ; *Considerations on Representative Government*, 1861 ; *Utilitarianism*, 1862—the best short account of hedonistic utilitarian morality ; *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, 1865 ; *Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, 1865 ; *The Subjection of Women*, 1869. A clear thinker and lucid writer ; practical in his aims ; a good critic of philosophy but not an original speculative thinker ; a rationalist ; in politics was the apostle of laissez-faire in economic matters, and favoured parliamentary reform ; always appealed to the reason—never to passion ; his style a model of orderly arrangement, fertile in illustration, strong in argument.

**George Henry Lewes** (1817-78) : a versatile intellect, famous for his connexion with George Eliot ; supported the positivism of Comte ; wrote a *Biographical History of Philosophy*, 1845-6 ; and a *Life of Goethe*, 1855 ; both clever and readable.

**Thomas Hill Green** (1836-82) : in *Prolegomena of Ethics*, 1883, wrote an important book, which is vitiated by its difficult style. Another Oxonian, **Henry Sidgwick** (1838-1900) continued Mill's work on political economy and ethics, and was an interesting writer too.

**Walter Bagehot** (1826-77) : was a journalist, of original powers of thought, who always wrote lucidly and wisely ; *Physics and Politics*, 1873, a practical man's philosophy, is his most important book.

**Scottish Philosophers.** **Sir William Rowan Hamilton** (1788-1856), an intricate and difficult writer, expounded Reid in his classes and editorially ; *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, 1859-61, contain some hard thinking and show much philosophi-

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cal power. His pupil, **Henry Longueville Mansel** (1820-71) developed his thought in the *Philosophy of the Conditioned*, 1866. **John Frederick Ferrier** (1808-64), a better writer and more original philosopher, linked Hamilton to the Hegelian school, represented by **Edward Caird** (1835-1908), professor at Glasgow and Jowett's successor at Balliol; his *Evolution of Religion*, 1893, is readable by others than specialists. His brother, **John Caird** (1820-98) worked along similar lines, making his studies of Hegel and Spinoza serve his idealistic religion.

**Herbert Spencer** (1820-1903): the one really original philosopher of the period; the first to base a philosophical scheme on science; applied the theory of evolution to explain the whole phenomena of the universe; worked as an engineer, 1837-46; contributed to the *Economist* and the *Westminster Review*; planned his synthetic philosophy by 1860; devoted the rest of his life to the working out of his system, designed to include the whole of human knowledge; the complete work contains *First Principles*, 1862; *Principles of Biology*, 1864-7; *Principles of Psychology*, 1870-2, (revised version of an earlier work, 1855); *Principles of Sociology*, 1876-96; *Principles of Ethics*, 1892-3: a huge work, in which the reader is not helped by any graces of style; endeavours to explain the universe on a mechanistic and rationalistic basis—unsuccessfully; inadequately equipped with practical scientific and historical knowledge; yet, with all its limitations, a masterly analysis, if not a satisfying synthesis.

## V. SCIENCE

Scientific writers rarely belong to literature proper; their works technical, and their main aim the orderly presentment of facts; but scientific ideas important to the progress of thought, and thus reflected in literature; the work of Faraday and Clerk Maxwell in electricity; of Joule and Lord Kelvin in heat; of Murchison and Lyell in geology; of the Herschels and Sir W. Huggins in astronomy; of Darwin and Huxley in biology; all had influence beyond the sphere of the specialist.

**Charles Robert Darwin** (1809-82): the scientific exponent of the evolution of species; a good clear writer and thinker;

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grandson of Erasmus Darwin (p. 168) ; educated at Shrewsbury ; went to Edinburgh to study medicine, 1825 ; and to Cambridge to prepare for the Church, 1828 ; come under the influence of the professor of botany, J. S. Henslow ; took his degree, 1831 ; went as naturalist on the voyage of the *Beagle*, 1831-6 ; slowly developed his ideas on species, and accumulated a large stock of observations ; published his *Journal of Researches*, 1839—a delightful book for all lovers of natural history ; married, 1839 ; settled at Down (Kent) 1842 ; from reading Malthus, approached the idea of natural selection ; he and Wallace read papers at the Linnaean Society, publishing the doctrine of the origin of species by natural selection, 1858 ; issued *The Origin of Species*, 1859—the result of more than twenty years' thought ; there followed the *Fertilization of Orchids*, 1862 ; *Climbing Plants*, 1865 ; *The Descent of Man*, 1871, extending his theories of evolution to man ; *Expression of the Emotions*, 1872 ; and *Earthworms*, 1881. Characterized by clear dispassionate thought, exemplary care in observation, a scrupulous fairness, love of truth, and an admirably suitable prose style ; created a revolution in biology, and in general thought.

**Thomas Henry Huxley** (1825-95) : the trenchant exponent of Darwinism ; educated for the medical profession ; became a naturalist from his voyage in the *Rattlesnake*, 1846-50 ; made valuable contributions to zoology, and wrote useful textbooks ; advocated the claims of science as an instrument of education and culture ; developed a strong, downright prose style, admirably adapted to controversial methods, in which he was unrivalled ; his Collected Essays among the masterpieces of sincere and successful polemic : e.g. *Man's Place in Nature*, 1863 ; the essay on Descartes in *Method and Results* ; the whole of *Science and Hebrew Tradition* ; and *Evolution and Ethics*, 1893, represent well his powers of sound argument and lucid thought. *Hume*, 1879, is an excellent exposition of the philosopher's ideas.

**Sir Charles Lyell** (1797-1875) : aided the theory of evolution by his development of the idea of uniformitarianism in *The Principles of Geology*, 1830-3 ; and by *The Antiquity of Man*, 1863.

**Alfred Russel Wallace** (1822-1913) : shared Darwin's discovery, but did not follow him in his later development ; wrote on many subjects, scientific and social ; *The Malay Archipelago*, 1869, is interesting from its association with the theory of selection.

**John Tyndall** (1820-93) : a physicist, and eloquent upholder of the claims of science ; made scientific subjects interesting in *Glaciers of the Alps*, 1860 ; *Heat : a mode of Motion*, 1863 ; *Sound*, 1867 ; *The Forms of Water*, 1872.

**Hugh Miller** (1802-56) : stonemason, geologist, journalist, preacher ; was an excellent writer ; not a great scientist, but an interesting personality ; best read in *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, 1854 ; good in *The Old Red Sandstone*, 1841 ; but

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unsatisfying in *Footprints of the Creator*, 1847 ; and *The Testimony of the Rocks*, 1857.

## VI. CRITICISM

The most helpful work in criticism is that of Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Rossetti, Swinburne, and others already mentioned ; two schools of criticism grew up : (a) the æsthetic, with Ruskin as its prophet : (b) the biographical-intellectual.

**Walter Pater** (1839-94) : next to Ruskin as an æsthetic critic ; dealt with many themes—literature, art, Platonism ; was an artist in prose ; but, living the life of a recluse at Oxford, his work lacked freshness, virility, healthy tone ; it is fastidiously perfect, but not strong ; imaginative ; and beautiful, like a carefully cultured hothouse-plant. *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, 1873, contains some of his most subtle prose-painting ; *Marius the Epicurean*, 1885, a romance of culture ; *Imaginary Portraits*, 1887 ; *Appreciations*, 1889 ; *Plato and Platonism*, 1893 ; *Greek Studies*, 1895 ; *Gaston de Latour* (unfinished), 1896 : all contain passages of exotic beauty ; express his own devotion to Art as his religion ; are laden with the incense of the cloistered scholar, full of subtle criticism.

**John Addington Symonds** (1840-93) : was a critic of the æsthetic school ; graceful in style, cultured in spirit ; his book on *The Renaissance in Italy*, 1875-86, is his masterpiece.

**Sir Leslie Stephen** (1832-1904) : is a typical representative of the rationalist school ; an admirer of the eighteenth century ; wrote good monographs on Swift and Johnson ; also *Hours in a Library*, 1874-9 ; *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 1876 ; *An Agnostic's Apology*, 1893 ; and was editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

**Richard Holt Hutton** (1826-1907) : editor of *The Spectator*, was an influence, rather than an original thinker : his essays on *Contemporary Thought and Thinkers*, 1894, are of the best kind of journey-work, sane and well-written.

**Stopford Brooke** (1832-1916) : poet, preacher, interpreter of English poets, did good work by his two volumes on Early English Literature ; also by his studies on Browning, Tennyson, Shelley, etc. ; he was a Celt and all his writings reveal his imaginative mind.

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**Richard Garnett** (1835–1906): also a poet, did much critical work of excellent value, including a short *Life of Carlyle*, 1887, and a history of *Italian Literature*, 1898.

## VII. MISCELLANEOUS PROSE-WRITERS

**George Borrow** (1803–81): an eccentric genius; born and educated in Norfolk; for some years a lawyer's clerk; acquired a wide knowledge of various languages; travelled as a colporteur in Russia, Spain and Morocco, 1883–9; wrote *The Zincali*, or *The Gypsies in Spain*, 1841; *The Bible in Spain*, 1843, a charmingly original book of travel, containing doubtless as much fiction as his novels, but always interesting; *Lavengro*, 1851; *The Romany Rye*, 1857—two rambling novels of gypsy life, in considerable part autobiographic; *Wild Wales*, 1862, the least satisfactory of his works. His novels have a peculiar attraction; plenty of incident and fresh air; unconventional characters; the personality of the author always intruded—aggressive, intolerant, quarrelsome, pugilistic—but individual.

**Richard Jefferies** (1848–87): a general writer who was an accurate observer of nature and intimately acquainted with her ways; *The Gamekeeper at Home*, 1878; *Wild Life in a Southern County*, 1879, show this faculty in a high degree; *Wood Magic*, 1881; *Bevis*, 1882; *The Story of my Heart*, 1883—have more sentiment and a good deal of mysticism; rather diffuse and too ambitious; but excellent writing.

**Samuel Butler** (1835–1902): a man of wide scholarship and original views; wrote the satiric, utopian *Erewhon*, 1872—a kind of modern *Gulliver*—an astute criticism of many features of modern life; *Erewhon Revisited*, 1901; *The Way of all Flesh* (publ. 1903), a novel packed with clever things; attributed a feminine authorship to the *Odyssey*; criticized evolution, machinery and other scientific improvements; in his *Note-books* (publ. 1912), is revealed as an exceptionally acute, if acid and half-cynical observer of the times.

**John Brown** (1810–82): a physician of Edinburgh, will be remembered by the occasional papers in *Horæ Subsecivæ*, 1858–61, somewhat in the vein of Lamb; and for the mingled humour and pathos of the sketches, *Rab and His Friends*; *Marjorie Fleming*; and *Our Dogs*.

**Lafcadio Hearn** (1850–1904): did journalism in America before going to Japan as professor of English Literature at Tokyo; was naturalized as a Japanese, and interpreted his country to us in charming and sympathetic books: *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, 1894; *Out of the East*, 1895; *Japan: an Attempt at Interpretation*, 1904.

**Sir Richard Burton** (1821–90): an adventurous traveller in the East and Africa; wrote the *Pilgrimage to El Medinah* and

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*Mecca*, 1855-6—one of our best books of travel ; translated the *Arabian Nights*, 1885-8 ; a profound scholar and strong personality.

**Biographers.** The age produced a number of good biographies, but not many great ones : Lockhart's *Scott* heads the list. John Forster (1812-76) was a friend of most men of letters of his day, and this fact (among others) gives value to his lives of Landor, 1869 ; and Dickens, 1872-4. Samuel Smiles (1812-1904) had a wide public for his *Lives of the Engineers*, 1877, and a number of similar books, such as *Self-help*, *Thrift*, etc., didactic in intention, but drawing their value from the biographical examples. Mrs. Oliphant (see p. 242), a gifted woman, was equally successful in biography and fiction : e.g. *Life of Edward Irving*, 1862 ; *William Blackwood and His Sons*, 1897.

**Scholarship.** Editorial work not literature, but valuable to students of literature : e.g. Frederick James Furnivall (1825-1911), pioneer of early English studies ; Walter W. Skeat (1835-1912), editor of Chaucer and *Piers Plowman* ; James Spedding (1808-81), editor of Bacon ; Alexander Dyce (1798-1869) and others, for their work on the Elizabethan drama ; David Masson (1822-1907), editor and biographer of Milton ; Sir John Rhys (1840-1918) for his work on Welsh literature and the Arthurian legend ; Andrew Lang (1844-1912), co-translator in excellent prose of Homer, an interesting writer on Greek myths, anthropology, fairy tales and Scottish History ; Mrs. Anna Jameson (1794-1860), a learned writer on sacred art and legends, author of the excellent *Characteristics of Shakespeare's Heroines*, 1832 ; Richard Chevenix Trench (1807-86), archbishop of Dublin, poet and scholar, author of *The Study of Words*, 1852, and *English Past and Present*, 1855.

## D. Novelists

### I. DICKENS AND THE REALISTIC SCHOOL

Charles Dickens (1812-70) : born at Portsea ; son of a pay clerk in the Navy ; early removed to London—then to Chatham ; his father a rather shiftless, improvident man who found his way into the Marshalsea prison ; sent to work in a blacking factory as a child of ten ; learned by experience much about “the seamy side” of London ; read Smollett and Fielding, his masters in fiction ; on his father's release was sent to school ; became a lawyer's clerk, 1827 ; afterwards a reporter, teaching himself shorthand ; was reporter in the House of Commons, 1831 ; gradually drifted into

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journalism, with sketches in the *Old Monthly Magazine*, 1833, and the *Evening Chronicle*; was married, 1836; published his papers as *Sketches by Boz*, 1836; leapt into popularity with the *Pickwick Papers*, published serially, 1836-7; visited America, 1842, and wrote his impressions rather frankly in *American Notes*; wrote his best Christmas stories, 1843-6; went on a tour in Italy, 1844; was the first editor of *The Daily News*, 1846; continued to write new novels steadily; edited *Household Words*, 1850-9, and *All the Year Round*, 1859; gave lectures, and public readings from his works—thus overtaxing his strength; died of apoplexy, leaving *Edwin Drood*, a fragment and a problem, 1870.

(a) **Works:** *Sketches by Boz*, 1836; *Pickwick Papers* 1836-7; *Oliver Twist*, 1838; *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1839; *The Old Curiosity Shop*, 1840; *Barnaby Rudge*, 1841; *American Notes*, 1842; *The Christmas Carol*, 1843; *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1844; *The Chimes*, 1845; *The Cricket on the Hearth*, 1846; *Pictures from Italy*, 1846; *Dombey and Son*, 1846; *David Copperfield*, 1850; *Bleak House*, 1853; *Hard Times*, 1854; *Little Dorrit*, 1857; *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859; *The Uncommercial Traveller*, 1860; *Great Expectations*, 1861; *Our Mutual Friend*, 1865; *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, 1870.

(b) **Famous Characters:** Dickens' characters rarely transcripts from life; most successful when there is a touch of the grotesque, of caricature or exaggeration; his humour saves them from becoming impossible; only Shakespeare has given us such a gallery of humorous types. Examples: Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Winkle, Jingle, the Wellers, Stiggins (*Pickwick*); Mr. Bumble, Fagin, Bill Sikes (*Oliver Twist*); Squeers, Ralph Nickleby, Vincent Crummles, Mantalini (*Nicholas Nickleby*); Dick Swiveller, The Marchioness Codlin and Short (*Old Curiosity Shop*); Scrooge, Trotty Veck, Dot Peerybingle (*Christmas Books*); Mr. Pecksniff, Jonas Chuzzlewit, Mark Tapley, Mrs. Gamp, Tom Pinch (*Martin Chuzzlewit*); Joe Bagstock, Captain Cuttle, Mr. Toots (*Dombey and Son*); Daniel Peggotty, Micawber, Uriah Heep (*David Copperfield*); Mr. Gradgrind, Bounderby (*Hard Times*); Joe Gargery (*Great Expectations*); Bradley Headstone, Silas Wegg (*Our Mutual Friend*), etc.

(c) **Characteristics:** He retained, throughout, the impress made by his early days in—(a) a legitimate pride in his own triumph and powers; (b) an unrivalled knowledge of

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London streets ; ( $\gamma$ ) an intense sympathy with the poor ; ( $\delta$ ) a certain absence of refinement which did not hide the true gentleman at the heart of him. Sensitive—almost vain in some ways ; tended to be theatrical and over-sentimental ; loved melodramatic effects. Fought abuses unflinchingly (Bumble, Squeers, etc.) ; exposed contemptible vices with the broadest colours (Pecksniff, Stiggins, Gradgrind, etc.) His vitality enormous ; his humour inexhaustible ; his optimism scarcely soiled by his harsh realistic experiences. Lacks the finer literary effects ; but unequalled on a crowded canvas ; the novelist of the ordinary man—the laureate of the “lower classes” ; essentially English, and of the Victorian age, in his attitude to life ; the psychology of some of his characters faulty, on the modern view ; but their vitality unquestionable. His early novels defective in form : their only unity being the showman’s skill in exhibiting his characters entertainingly ; the later novels have a more compact structure and good plots ; yet the first are more varied ; they palpitate with humanity—boisterous humour, true tenderness, and homely delight ; the violence of love and the depths of religion not fully probed. He was not a poet, but a master of romantic realism, infused with social satire, amiable caricature, hatred of hypocrisy, a just ethical standard ; with Carlyle and Ruskin a powerful influence on the tone of public life. His two historical novels : *Barnaby Rudge* (Gordon Riots, 1780) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (French Revolution) are sufficiently good to weaken the charge of insularity and narrowness of knowledge often brought against him.

**Charles Reade** (1814–84) : a man of some means and of university education ; shared with Dickens his humanitarian aims and his dramatic methods ; was a determined realist, sure of his facts ; wrote and worked out his plots carefully ; his style good, but liable to lapses ; aspired to the drama : *Masks and Faces*, 1852, and *Drink*, 1879, fairly good ; the novel his true sphere ; *Peg Woffington* and *Christie Johnstone*, 1853—two splendid short stories ; *It is Never too Late to Mend*, 1856—a grim exposure of our prison-system, dramatic and powerful ; *The Cloister and the Hearth*, 1861—a novel of the fifteenth century, romantic and realistic, adventurous and genuinely pathetic, one of our best historical novels ; *Hard Cash*, 1863—on private lunatic asylums ; *Griffith Gaunt*, 1866—a novel of jealousy ; *Put Yourself in His Place*, 1870. The didactic purpose generally too

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prominent ; dramatic power and the art of the true storyteller never absent either.

**Wilkie Collins** (1824–89) : friend and protégé of Dickens ; had not his gift of humour or his power of characterization ; but was a master of the art of construction ; in him the plot, i.e. the story itself, is the main thing ; *The Woman in White*, 1860 ; and *The Moonstone*, 1868, are his masterpieces.

**James Payn** (1830–98) : was also skilful in the art of constructing a plot : *Lost Sir Massingberd*, 1864, is a good novel of the mechanical type ; *By Proxy*, 1878, a moving story of incident in China, shows dramatic skill and sense of character also.

**Henry Kingsley** (1830–76) : author of *Geoffrey Hamlyn*, 1859 ; *Ravenshoe*, 1861 ; *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, 1865 ; books of abundant vitality and excellent spirit ; but formless and digressive ; had some humour, a little dramatic sense, good powers of description.

**Sir Walter Besant** (1836–1901) : an accomplished writer ; not in the first flight ; distinguished by his love of literature, his humanitarian zeal, his fidelity to life as he saw it ; alone, he wrote *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, 1882 ; *For Faith and Freedom*, 1888 ; in collaboration with **James Rice** (1844–82), *Ready Money Mortiboy*, 1871 ; *The Golden Butterfly*, 1876, etc.—showing a sense of humour akin to that of Dickens.

**George Gissing** (1857–1903) : passed his early life in struggle and poverty in London ; depicted the harsh side of London life, without the humour and relief of Dickens ; consequently never became popular in spite of his sincerity, his pathos, and literary skill ; his early works entirely gloomy : e.g. *Demos*, 1886 ; *Thyrza*, 1887 ; *New Grub Street*, 1891—a powerful study of struggling literary men ; *The Odd Women*, 1893 ; wrote an appreciative *Life of Dickens*, 1898 ; in improved circumstances, gave us his best book, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, 1903 ; and a more cheerful novel, *Will Warburton* (posthumous).

**Thomas Hardy** (b. 1840) : the living survivor of the realistic school ; has Dickens' power of delineating humorously humble characters ; has done for "Wessex" what Dickens did for London ; but is greatest in tragedy ; the gloom relieved by descriptions of Nature of poetic force and power ; the sense of a blind, unguided Destiny present always in his dealings with human character ; has not Dickens' buoyant cheeriness, nor his abundant vitality ; to him Life a more complex, more mysterious, phenomenon ; the grip of Evolution has caught his spirit.

**Chief Works** : *Under the Greenwood Tree*, 1872 ; *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, 1873 ; *Far from the Madding Crowd*, 1874 ; *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 1886 ; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 1888 ; *Life's Little Ironies*, 1894 ; *Jude the Obscure*, 1896 ; *The Dynasts*,

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1904-8—a dramatic trilogy on Napoleon ; Collected Poems, 1919,  
—including *Wessex Poems* ; *Time's Laughing Stocks* ; *Satires of Circumstance* ; *Moments of Vision* ; and many other poems.

## II. THACKERAY AND HIS SCHOOL

**William Makepeace Thackeray** (1811-63) : born at Calcutta, the son of an Indian official ; educated at Charterhouse, and Cambridge, 1829, where he was a contemporary of Tennyson ; travelled on the Continent, 1830-1 ; visited Goethe at Weimar ; studied art at Paris ; returned to London to read for the Bar ; took to art and journalism ; wrote for *Fraser*, *The New Monthly Magazine*, and contributed regularly to *Punch*, 1842-54 ; published *Vanity Fair*, 1847-8 ; edited *The Cornhill Magazine*, 1860-2 ; died suddenly, 1863, leaving *Denis Duval* unfinished.

(a) **Novels**: *Barry Lyndon*, 1844 ; *Vanity Fair*, 1847-8 ; *Pendennis*, 1849-50 ; *Esmond*, 1852 ; *The Newcomes*, 1854-5 ; *The Virginians*, 1858-9 ; *Lovel the Widower* and *The Adventures of Philip* (in *Cornhill*, 1860-2).

(b) **General Writings** : In *Fraser* ; *Yellowplush Papers*, 1838-40 ; *Catherine*, 1839-40, a caricature story of crime, aimed at *Lytton*, 1839 ; *Barry Lyndon*, another story of a criminal, one of his most powerful writings. In *Punch* : *Novels by Eminent Hands*, 1847—including *Rebecca* and *Rowena*, the brilliant parody of *Ivanhoe* ; *Codlingsby* and *Phil Fogarty*, more scathing parodies of *Disraeli* and *Lever* ; *The Book of Snobs*, 1848—bitter and withering satire of the faults of English society. Lectures delivered in England and America : *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, 1852-3 ; *The Four Georges*, 1856-7. In the *Cornhill* : *Roundabout Papers*, 1860-2—pleasant, chatty essays on general subjects.

(c) **Characters** : Not so varied, nor so humorous, nor so vivid as those of Dickens ; but deeper, and exhibited more as wholes ; consistent with themselves ; fully developed ; belong to a more restrained society ; their pathos truer to life ; the satire less obvious, more subtle : e.g. *Becky Sharp*, *George Osborne*, *Rawdon Crawley*, the two *Pitt Crawleys*, *Jos. Sedley*, *Amelia*, *Colonel Dobbin*, *Lord Steyne* (*Vanity Fair*) ; *George Warrington*, *Major Pendennis*, *Laura*, *Captain Costigan* (*Pendennis*) ; *Lady Castlewood*, *Beatrix*, the *Old Pretender*, *Richard Steele* (*Esmond*) ; *Colonel Newcome*, *Ethel Newcome* (*The Newcomes*).

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(d) **Characteristics** : A moralist and keen observer of society ; a humorist, often sad over the vanities of life ; a satirist, bitterly scornful of "snobs," and all who are not what they pretend to be ; an admirer of the simple human instincts of goodness and devotion to duty, he becomes almost cynical in his dealings with the opposite ; his works a realistic sermon on the text "Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas!" —the worthlessness of the things men strive for, and of the men who strive ; was closely acquainted with the literature of the eighteenth century ; *Esmond* a masterly picture of that age, in a style that might have been Addison's ; *The English Humorists*, excellent critical studies of Swift, Steele, Fielding, Hogarth, etc. ; Fielding his master in fiction ; but, except *Esmond*, his novels lack the interest of plot ; their strength lies in the delineation of character, in humour, in their human *ensemble*, in the author's intrusion of his personal reflections, in their well-balanced and enjoyable prose ; neither pathos nor heroics accompanied by gush or sentimentality ; virtue not always rewarded, but vice always contemptible and in the end discomfited. As a man, Thackeray was indolent and not personally ambitious ; witty and genial ; recognized by his best contemporaries as the serious moralist he was.

**Anthony Trollope** (1815-82) : a Post Office official, who devoted his leisure to the production of fiction, and wrote some fifty novels ; a competent craftsman who always wrote a good tale ; had a sense for the dramatic in everyday life ; could also draw real characters ; was a successful painter of the ordinary life of the upper and middle classes ; especially that of country towns and cathedral cities ; among his noteworthy characters are Mrs. Proudie, Archdeacon Grantly, Mr. Harding, Dr. Thorne—all playing their parts in the Barsetshire series : viz. *Barchester Towers* ; *Framley Parsonage* ; *The Warden* ; *Doctor Thorne* ; *The Small House at Allington* ; *The Last Chronicle of Barset*—1855-67 ; of his other novels, *The Three Clerks*, 1858, and *Orley Farm*, 1862, are comparable to these ; he wrote also an *Autobiography*, 1883, and a life of Thackeray, 1879 ; his methods and Thackeray's quite different ; yet he owed much to the greater genius.

**George du Maurier** (1834-96) : like Thackeray, an artist on *Punch*, made literary fame with *Trilby*, 1894, which had a great temporary popularity, and should still be remembered.

**William de Morgan** (1839-1917) : became a novelist in his old age with *Joseph Vance*, 1906 ; and *Alice-for-Short*, 1907 ; two delightful books ; discursive and garrulous ; but shrewd in observation, wide in sympathies, pleasantly touched with humour.

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## III. WOMEN NOVELISTS

**Charlotte Brontë** (1816–55) : the most famous of three remarkable sisters—daughters of the Rev. Patrick Brontë, an Irish clergyman, vicar of Haworth in the midst of the Yorkshire moors ; had a life of gloomy experiences ; went to a school at Cowan Bridge, realistically described in *Jane Eyre* ; afterwards in Brussels, 1842–4 ; published, with her sisters, a volume of poems, 1846 ; failed to find a publisher for *The Professor*, 1846 ; became famous with *Jane Eyre*, 1847—a masterpiece of sensational realism, showing fine descriptive power, a bold, individual nature, and grim insight into unusual types of character ; lost her sisters by death, had troubles with her brother's violent intemperance and her father's eccentricities, but produced *Shirley*, 1849 ; *Villette*, 1853 ; was married to Mr. Nicholls, her father's curate, 1854 ; but lived rather less than a year to enjoy her happiness.

Her work lacked humour and grace ; her limited experiences narrowed her range ; her characters—e.g. the three curates in *Shirley*—too faithful copies of real life ; yet the recognition of her genius by Thackeray was just : its chief ingredients were an intense imaginative power, an unconventional sincerity, a power of dealing with strong passions scarcely rivalled, a distinguished prose style ; she reveals herself as a brave woman, undaunted by hardship and a cruel destiny, though influenced by them.

**Emily Brontë** (1818–48) : had perhaps greater genius than Charlotte ; her character seen in her poems which are of striking originality and power—e.g. “No coward soul is mine” ; her one novel, *Wuthering Heights*, 1847—a grim and repulsive story of the Yorkshire moors, remarkable for the terrible figure of Heathcliff, and for its intensely-felt descriptions of the bleak scenery of the wild country.

**Anne Brontë** (1820–49) : of gentler nature than her sisters ; wrote *Agnes Grey*, 1847 ; and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, 1848, which have only a reflected fame.

**Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell** (1810–65) : author of a sympathetic and delightful *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, 1857 ; spent her early life in Knutsford, the original of Cranford ; married a Unitarian minister and lived in Manchester ; impressed by the evils of the factory-system, wrote *Mary Barton*, 1848—“a purpose novel,” exposing them ; shows finer genius in

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*Cranford*, 1853, a wholly delightful sketch of village life and character, humorous, naive, pathetic, true ; wrote about forty other novels—most of them agreeable, but not first-rate : *Sylvia's Lovers*, 1863, and *Cousin Phillis*, 1864, perhaps the most pleasing.

**George Eliot** (Mary Ann Evans : 1819–80) : the greatest of the women novelists ; stands near the level of Thackeray and Dickens ; was born in Warwickshire, near Nuneaton ; lived with her father till his death, 1849—at Coventry, after 1841 ; had no noteworthy education, but early taught herself Latin, Greek, French, and German, and acquired much knowledge of philosophy ; in early life attached to the evangelical faith of her father ; gradually became an agnostic ; published a translation of Strauss' *Life of Jesus*, 1846 ; went to London, 1849 ; was assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, 1851 ; her serious articles brought her into touch with London philosophical and literary circles ; published her translation of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, 1854 ; went to live with George Henry Lewes as his wife, 1854 ; the union caused her much social trouble, but was happy, and profitable to her genius ; on Lewes' advice wrote her first novels, the *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 1857—published in *Blackwood* under her pseudonym ; worked steadily, publishing new novels and poems at intervals ; her literary career ended with the *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, 1879 ; left solitary by the death of Lewes, 1878, she married Mr. J. W. Cross, a banker, 1880.

(a) **Novels** : *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 1857 ; *Adam Bede*, 1859 ; *The Mill on the Floss*, 1860 ; *Silas Marner*, 1861 ; *Romola*, 1863 ; *Felix Holt*, 1866 ; *Middlemarch* (in part), 1871–2 ; *Daniel Deronda*, 1876. **Chief Poems** : *The Spanish Gypsy*, 1868 ; *The Legend of Jubal*, 1874.

(b) **Characteristics** : A woman of exceptional intellectual power ; a philosophic thinker, as well as an observer of life ; the philosophy more apparent in her later novels, when she has exhausted her personal experiences ; her novels thus novels of thought ; yet full of sympathy ; sensitive ; humorous ; especially strong in the delineation of women ; morally stern, particularly in dealing with love ; keen dramatic sense ; excellent descriptive power ; restrained

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and weighty style ; sententious and aptly pointed remarks on many things ; in spite of her learning, no novelist combines in one work so many of the possible excellences of the novel ; she escapes completely the stumbling-blocks offered by her religion (Amos Barton, Gilfil, Dinah Morris, Savonarola, Mr. Farebrother, Casaubon, etc.) and by her "marriage" ; her treatment of love profound and just (Adam Bede, Hetty Sorrel, Dorothea Brooke, Romola, etc.) ; her ability to deal with a "problem" in character or in life (Tito and Romola, Dorothea and Casaubon, Lydgate and Rosamond, Silas Marner) ; her skill in construction, e.g. *Adam Bede*, *Silas Marner* ; her full drawing of many other characters, from within, e.g. Mrs. Poyser, Maggie Tulliver, Tom Tulliver, Felix Holt, Bulstrode, Mary Garth, Daniel Deronda ; *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Middle-march*, among the greatest masterpieces of fiction : *Silas Marner*, a gem of the art ; *Romola*, not wholly successful historically, rather heavy, but full of fine work ; her poetry lacking in the highest qualities, but dignified, weighty, thoughtful.

**Charlotte Mary Yonge** (1823–1901) : a conscientious and careful writer, wrote one very good novel—*The Heir of Redclyffe*, 1856 ; highly praised by Morris and Rossetti ; its aristocratic and High-Church moral tone reflected in many weaker novels, e.g. *The Daisy Chain* ; *The Chaplet of Pearls* ; they tell good stories, but are too primly sentimental for modern tastes.

**Mrs. Henry Wood** (1814–87) : achieved great popularity with *East Lynne*, 1861 ; her plots good ; with no pretensions to literary distinction : best in *The Channings*, 1862 ; *Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles*, 1862 ; *Roland Yorke*, 1869 ; edited *The Argosy*, 1867–87.

**Mrs. Dinah Maria Craik** (1826–87) : also appealed successfully to the uncritical portion of the middle-class with *John Halifax, Gentleman*, 1856 ; a good tale ; quiet and humdrum ; and unimpeachable in "moral" tone.

**Mrs. Margaret Oliphant** (1828–97) : more considerable in the literary sense ; wrote too much, and just missed greatness ; *Chronicles of Carlingford*, 1862–76, contain her best fiction.

**Mary Elizabeth Braddon** (1837–1915) : a prolific writer, whose work maintained a very even and satisfactory standard ; *Lady Audley's Secret*, 1862, an excellent mystery-tale, with pleasant touches of character ; competently written, though without great passages.

**Ouida** (Louisa de la Ramée : 1839–1908) : a novelist of considerable power shown only in flashes ; excitement and passion overdrawn ; colours too glaring ; characters too startlingly heroic or villainous ; e.g. *Strathmore*, 1865 ; *Under Two Flags*, 1867 : both worth reading.

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**X John Oliver Hobbes** (Mrs. Craigie : 1867-1906) : a woman of real culture and powers of thought; witty and brilliant; discusses in an easy style political and religious matters in *The School for Saints*, 1897; and its sequel, *Robert Orange*, 1900.

## IV. ROMANTIC NOVELISTS

**Charles Kingsley** (1819-75) : a native of Devonshire; had a brilliant career at Cambridge, where he became professor of Modern History, 1859; was appointed rector of Eversley, Hants, 1844; came under the influence of Maurice and Carlyle; was deeply interested in Christian Socialism and in Chartism (*Alton Locke*, 1850); a strong patriot and protestant; had an unfortunate controversy with Newman; became canon of Chester, 1869, and of Westminster, 1873.

Kingsley was a good poet, especially in certain minor pieces, like the "Sands of Dee"; in *The Saint's Tragedy*, 1847—a poetic drama on the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary; and in *Andromeda*, 1858—containing some of the best hexameters in English. In prose wrote *Glaucus*, 1857—a delightful "nature-book"; *The Water Babies*, 1863—"a fairy tale for land babies"—not merely a children's book; and the novels: *Yeast*, 1848; *Alton Locke*, 1850; *Hypatia*, 1853; *Westward Ho*, 1855; *Two Years Ago*, 1857; *Hereward the Wake*, 1866. The novels show high literary qualities: descriptive power, stirring narrative, finely-caught sea effects, breezy characterization; generally too discursive, and defective in construction; at his best in *Westward Ho*—with the sailors and protestants of Elizabethan times; *Hypatia* a great historical novel on the religious strife of the fourth century; *Alton Locke*, the best of the "purpose" novels, with a well-drawn character in Sandy Mackaye, and some fine snatches of verse: a sympathetic study of a Chartist; a man of the open air, a "muscular" Christian, he was not successful with subtle and reflective types of character, except perhaps in *Hypatia*.

**Robert Louis Stevenson** (1850-94) : a romancer who was also a great prose writer, a literary artist, and a moralist; son of a well-known engineer; declined his father's profession; was called to the Bar, 1875, but loth to practise; gave himself to literature against his father's wish; was completely alienated from his father by his drift from orthodox Calvinism; wrote essays for magazines, in a careful, fastidious style; travelled much

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in search of health, and produced two delightfully personal books of travel, 1878-9; married Mrs. Osbourne in San Francisco, 1880; obtained general recognition with *Treasure Island*, 1883; after trying many climates, settled at Samoa, 1890, and died there four years later.

A man of attractive character; humorous and whimsical; brave and serious; fought an heroic battle with consumption; remained a cheerful optimist to the end. As a poet he wrote verse of real charm in *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 1885; *Underwoods*, 1887, and *Ballads*, 1891, are uneven, but contain much work of distinction. As an essayist, he is graceful, well-read, often charming and stimulating in *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881; and *Familiar Studies in Men and Books*, 1882. His best travel-books—*An Inland Voyage*, 1878; *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, 1879; *Across the Plains*, 1892—show a keen zest, humorous observation, and a delightful personality. His novels are of the true romantic stuff—full of adventure, variety and colour; successful in characterization (*John Silver*, *Alan Breck Stewart*); especially good when the scene is laid in Scotland; show the skill of a born tale-teller (*Tusitala*); not equally strong with female character; his style fully formed, but perhaps over-careful in its fastidious finish; yet he always managed to produce the right atmosphere.

The chief novels were: *New Arabian Nights*, 1882—grotesque stories, not wholly successful; *Treasure Island*, 1883—the prince of pirate stories; *Prince Otto*, 1885; *Kidnapped*, 1886—an admirable story of the last adventure of the Stewarts; *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886—a masterpiece of sensational fiction, dealing with a case of dual personality; *The Black Arrow*, 1888; *The Master of Ballantrae*, 1889; *Catrina*, 1893—sequel to *Kidnapped*; *Weir of Hermiston*, 1894—a masterly fragment, containing his best female study in *Kirstie Elliott*; besides a number of excellent short stories, such as *Will o' the Mill*, *The Beach of Falesa*, *The Pavilion on the Links*; and (in collaboration with his stepson, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne), *The Wrong Box*, 1892; *The Wrecker*, 1892; *The Ebb-Tide*, 1894. His *Vailima Letters* contain interesting lights on his life in the South Seas.

**Richard Doddridge Blackmore** (1825-1900): made the scenery and legends of the Doone valley in North Devon familiar to everyone by *Lorna Doone*, 1869; had a gift for describing familiar scenery, and the broad humour of rustic characters; wrote nothing nearly equal to his masterpiece; *The Maid of Sher*, 1872; *Cripps the Carrier*, 1876; *Perlycross*, 1894, etc., err on the side of verisimilitude, but are racy stories.

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**William Black** (1841-98) : another competent romancer, without great genius, but with a gift for "atmosphere"; gave the remote parts of Western Scotland a place in fiction; *In Silk Attire*, 1869; *A Daughter of Heth*, 1871: both good stories, without being masterpieces; *The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton*, 1872; *A Princess of Thule*, 1873: more popular, but less inspired.

**John Henry Shorthouse** (1834-1903) : a Birmingham man of business, wrote one first-rate romance, *John Inglesant*, 1881—a carefully written study of a royalist supporter of Charles I, strong in its treatment of the religious aspects of the king's cause.

**George John Whyte-Melville** (1821-78) : a country gentleman, killed by an accident in his favourite sport of hunting; fought in the Crimea; had a competent knowledge of history, which he used in a series of readable romances: e.g. *Holmby House*, 1860; *The Gladiators*, 1863.

**Lewis Carroll** (Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson: 1832-98): a mathematician, gave the world two quite original fantasias, full of quaint humour and wit: *Alice in Wonderland*, 1865; *Through the Looking-Glass*, 1871: unique books, nominally for children, but not less pleasing to more sophisticated readers.

## V. MISCELLANEOUS FICTION

**George Meredith** (1828-1909) : born in Hampshire; educated in Germany; did journalistic work as a war correspondent in Italy; married the daughter of Thomas Love Peacock; lived the uneventful life of a man of letters, producing novels and poems at intervals till 1895. His **Poems** include: *Poems*, 1851; *Modern Love*—a series of 16-line "sonnets," telling obscurely, but with great distinction of expression the tragic story of an unhappy marriage (his own?); *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*, 1883; *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life*, 1887; *A Reading of Earth*, 1888: full of deep thought; difficult in expression; bold in imagery; condensed and subtle in meaning; face the harsh facts of nature, but in a mood of austere optimism (*The Woods of Westermain*, *Hymn to Colour*, *The Lark Ascending*, etc.); occasionally humorous (*Jump-to-Glory Jane*, *Juggling Jerry*); but generally overweighted with severe intellectual power, which renders them imperfect in execution. **Novels**: *The Shaving of Shagpat*, 1856

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—a humorous and fantastic set of Oriental tales ; *Farina*, 1857 ; *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, 1859—a great problem-novel and love romance, rich in wisdom, humour, subtle study of character (e.g. Sir Austin Feverel, Adrian Harley, Lady Blandish, Richard and Lucy) ; *Evan Harrington*, 1861—a lighter comedy containing the satirically humorous Countess de Saldar ; *Sandra Belloni*, 1864, and *Vittoria*, 1867—two stories of a singer, joined on to the War of Italian Independence of 1848—poetic, passionate, humorous ; *Rhoda Fleming*, 1865—the simplest in style, but not the less impressive ; *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*, 1871 ; *Beauchamp's Career*, 1876—a fine political novel, with a strong love interest ; *The Egoist*, 1879—his most characteristic work, rich in feeling, but over-subtle in analysis and style, full of humour and character (e.g. Sir Willoughby Patterne, Clara Middleton, Vernon Whitford, Crossjay Patterne) ; *The Tragic Comedians*, 1880—the story of the socialist Lassalle ; *Diana of the Crossways*, 1885—a brilliant study of an intellectual woman, based it was supposed on fact ; *One of our Conquerors*, 1891 ; *Lord Ormont and his Aminta*, 1894 ; *The Amazing Marriage*, 1895 : the last three the climax of his tortuous, aphoristic style, but containing three magnificent women characters—Natalie Radnor, Aminta Farrell, Carinthia Jane Kirby.

**Characteristics.** His general attitude expounded in the *Essay on Comedy*, 1877 ; the “ Comic Spirit ” always present—a spirit of health and sanity, in moral as well as mental things ; his tragedies arise from excess or overweening development of some quality ; great women characters ; great love scenes ; poetic sensibility to nature ; imaginative intellect ; subtle analysis of complex character ; style often involved and intricate, often condensed to the point of obscurity ; dialogue always pregnant and witty, but often too clever ; his world as unreal as that of Dickens, but self-consistent ; in it thrive a love of freedom, rich emotions, brilliant intellect, brave grasp of the problems of life : while pretence, conceit, hypocrisy, shrivel and die.

**Mark Rutherford** (William Hale White : 1831–1913) : an official at the Admiralty, wrote two stories of religious autobiography ; *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, 1881, and

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*Mark Rutherford's Deliverance*, 1885 : dealing with the religious doubts of the time in clear prose and reverent tone ; also wrote two short realistic novels : *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, 1887 ; *Catharine Furze*, 1894 : severe and simple in method, but attractive by their obvious sincerity.

**George Macdonald** (1824-1905) : a minister driven from his church for heterodoxy, afterwards a journalist and novelist ; wrote *David Elginbrod*, 1863 ; *Robert Falconer*, 1868 ; and many other successful pictures of Scottish life and character ; was a poet too ; in his novels the poetic vein predominates along with his religious convictions.

## E. The Present Day

(a) **Living Writers** : (i) Many have established themselves on the direct line of evolution from past traditions ; such are, in various ways, *poets* like Robert Bridges (1844), Austin Dobson (1840), Sir William Watson (1858), Sir Henry Newbolt (1862) ; *novelists* like Mrs. Humphry Ward (1851), George Moore (1853), Stanley Weyman (1855) ; *historical and critical writers* like, Frederic Harrison (1831), Viscount Morley (1838) and Viscount Bryce (1838).

(ii) Others like Sir James Barrie (1860) and "Anthony Hope" (1863) have, along with literary idiosyncrasies of their own, links both with the past and the present modes.

(iii) Men in whom a new note of real power and significance is heard, who have not yet completed, as we may hope, the full development of their talents, are such *poets* of the complex mood of the present generation as Laurence Housman (1867), Walter de la Mare (1873), John Drinkwater (1882), William H. Davies (1870), Lascelles Abercrombie (1881) ; Laurence Binyon (1869) and Alfred Noyes (1880), are perhaps nearer to our second group ; John Masefield (1874), as a writer of vigorous ballads and spirited narrative poems, has a place of his own ; Rudyard Kipling (1865) at his best a good poet is an artist in the short story and has given literary vitality to India ; *novelists* like Joseph Conrad (1857), Maurice Hewlett (1861), Eden Phillpotts (1862), H. G. Wells (1866), Arnold Bennett (1867), John Galsworthy (1867) have successfully applied the novel to new themes, and Wells in particular has widened its range ; a school of severe realists has developed, of whose work *Sinister Street* by Compton Mackenzie (1883) may be taken as typical ; many women novelists of real power are still writing : e.g. "Lucas Malet" (Mrs. Mary St. Leger Harrison).

(b) **Drama** : The Victorian Age not great in drama ; successful acting plays, with literary qualities, few. **James Sheridan Knowles** (1784-1862) enjoyed popularity with *William Tell*,

# AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

1825 ; *The Hunchback*, 1832, etc., but he lacked poetic power. **Bulwer Lytton's** *Lady of Lyons* is still acted, and is readable. Notable revival of comedy of manners at the end of the century, e.g. **Oscar Wilde** (1854-1900), poet, prose-writer, literary aesthete, produced witty and clever comedies in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, 1893 ; *A Woman of No Importance*, 1894 ; *The Importance of being Earnest*, and *The Ideal Husband*, 1899 ; but they lack a serious outlook on life. This was remedied by **Sir Arthur Wing Pinero** (1855) in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, 1895 ; etc. Still later, the influence of Ibsen, aided by more enlightened dramatic criticism, ripened in the plays of **George Bernard Shaw** (1856) who has made the drama a vital force for the propagation of ideas without losing its interest as drama ; e.g. in *John Bull's Other Island*, 1904 ; *The Doctor's Dilemma*, 1906, etc. **Stephen Phillips** (1868-1915), a poet, wrote several successful tragedies in a fluent blank verse : e.g. *Paolo and Francesca*, 1899 ; *Herod*, 1901 ; *Ulysses*, 1902 ; the interest aroused by these rapidly waned.

(c) **The Gaelic Revival**: Political events encouraged the study of Gaelic and the revival of Gaelic poetry ; apart from this a purely literary movement arose in Ireland, English in form and language, but Irish in spirit ; the Scottish Gaels have also found voices in modern literature ; and other poets, such as Meredith in (*Aneurin's Harp*, etc.), the Manxman **T. E. Brown** (1830-97) and the Cornish vicar of Morwenstow, **R. S. Hawker** (1803-75), have also touched Celtic chords. Robert Buchanan (see p. 218) in the *Book of Orm* (1870) gave us a deliberate and ambitious attempt to embody the Celtic spirit in verse.

“ **Fiona Macleod** ” (William Sharp : 1856-1905) : a poet and critic whose second (Gaelic) personality was not revealed till after his death ; expressed under his pseudonym the Gaelic spirit as reflected in a modern devotee ; in prose and verse having the atmosphere of a mystic dreamland ; hazy in outline but often beautiful in suggestion : e.g. *The Mountain Lover*, 1894 ; *The Sin Eater*, 1895.

From Ireland we have had *Dark Rosaleen* and other lyrics by **James Clarence Mangan** (1803-49) ; *Lays of the Western Gael* by **Sir Samuel Ferguson** (1810-86) ; *The Fairies* by **William Allingham** (1824-89) ; and the best work of Mr. **William Butler Yeats** (b. 1865), a lyrist of the highest class and one of the greatest of living poets ; also **Dora Sigerson** (Mrs. Shorter : d. 1918) a poetess of real sweetness ; “ **A.E.** ” (George Russell : 1867) and other living writers.

**John Millington Synge** (1871-1909) : the first Irishman to write successful dramas of Irish life ; was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College ; wandered through Germany, France, and Italy ; advised by Yeats to return to Ireland, 1897 ; lived the peasant life on the Aran Islands ; learned the Irish

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language and customs ; wrote poems and prose-sketches ; only his plays memorable deal with the tragic side of Irish life in a realistic, non-mystical way ; were performed by the Irish National Theatre Society (founded 1903). *In the Shadow of the Glen* ; *Riders to the Sea* ; *The Tinker's Wedding* ; *The Well of the Saints* ; *The Playboy of the Western World* ; *Deirdre of the Sorrows*.

(d) Future historians of English literature will doubtless have to take account of the literature of the Colonies, which at present is merely at its beginnings. But the voice of Australia is heard in a few poems by **Adam Lindsay Gordon** (1833-70) ; there is true poetry in some of the Canadian lyrics of **Archibald Lampman** (1861-99), **William Henry Drummond** (1854-1907) **Bliss Carman** (1861) and others.

The literature of the United States has now become a subject for special treatment, though many of its greater writers are of necessity well known here. Among them is **Henry James** (1843-1916), a very great novelist, who became a naturalized Englishman during the War ; author of *The Tragic Muse*, 1890 ; *What Maisie Knew*, 1897 ; *The Wings of the Dove*, 1902 ; and many other novels and short stories, showing a subtle power of intricate mental analysis, and written in a prose style often extremely beautiful and fit, generally lucid and musical, but sometimes tangled into fine threads by his minute method of dealing with the psychology of his characters.



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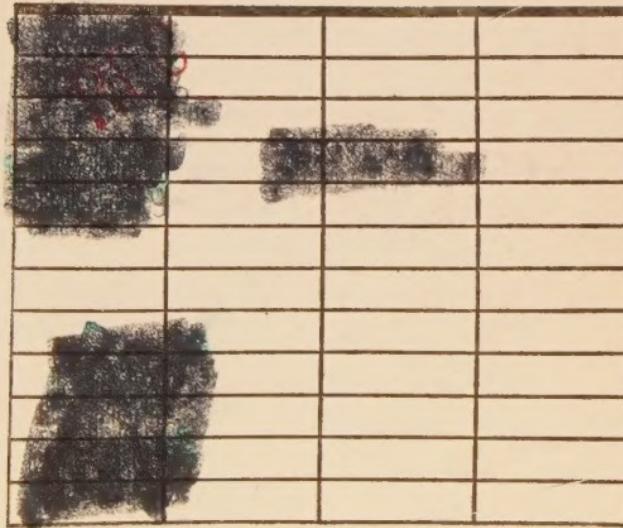






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